What Is the People's Front? — GEORGE DIMITROV

new Masses

MAY 26, 1936

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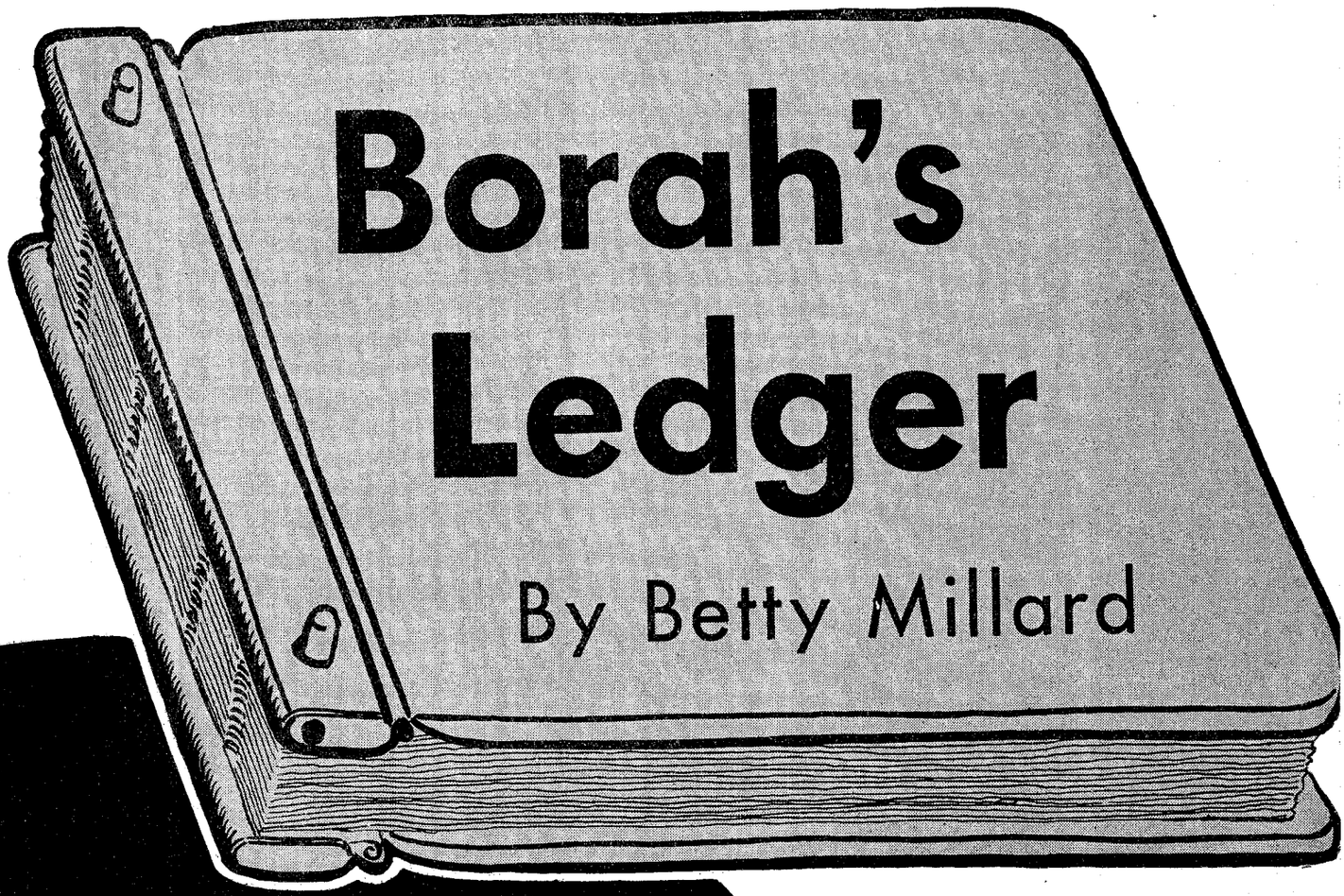

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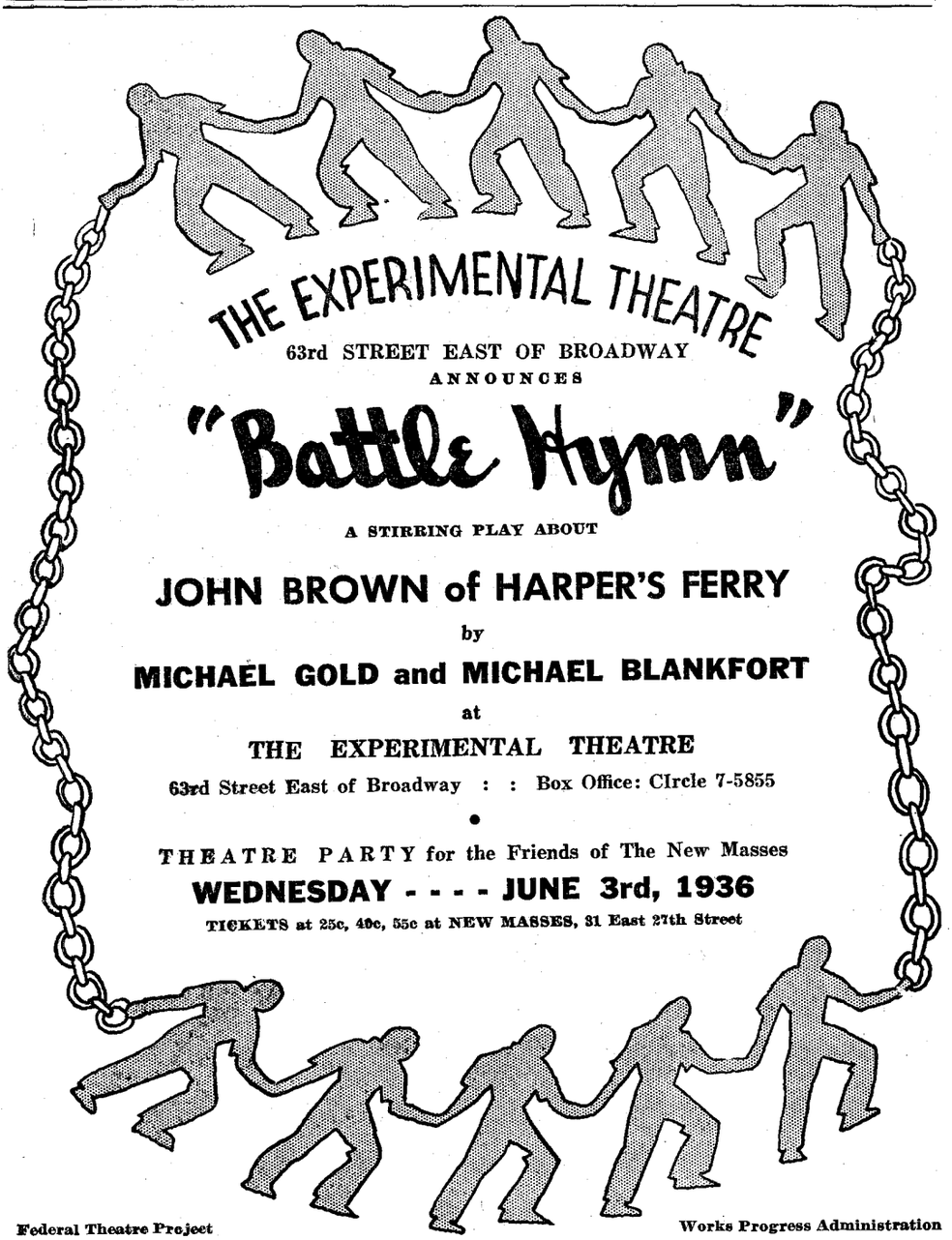

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New Masses

MAY 26, 1936

Unconstitutional!

IN declaring the Guffey Coal Control Act unconstitutional, the Supreme Court has ruled in effect: (1) Congress has no power to pass laws regulating hours, wages, working conditions, or laws protecting labor's right to organize; (2) Congress cannot regulate any industry which does not comply with the Court's notion of the interstate commerce clause, which for all practical purposes confines regulation to transport; (3) Congress may not levy any taxes which the Court may consider a "penalty" on Big Business.

Simultaneously, the District of Columbia court's ruling that the Resettlement Administration is unconstitutional threatens the whole of the federal relief structure. And now that the Supreme Court has wrecked the N.R.A., A.A.A., and the Railroad Retirement Act, it is ready to destroy the Wagner Labor Disputes Acts.

These measures did little enough for the mass of the American people. On behalf of Big Business, the Supreme Court destroys any measure which may hamper, however slightly, the tory drive to smash the unions, crush civil rights, reduce living standards.

The Supreme Court has declared that it is illegal for Congress to pass laws which benefit the people. The President has surrendered to pressure from the tories. To this challenge of Big Business, the labor movement and progressives must reply by demanding: (1) the administration and Congress must repudiate the reactionary decisions of the Supreme Court; (2) Congress must pass legislation at this session to prevent the federal courts from invalidating any future laws which may benefit the people; (3) the autocratic power of the Supreme Court must be curbed by constitutional amendment.

Congress Speeds Up

SENATOR Joseph T. Robinson, of Arkansas, leader of the Democratic majority, wants to steer Congress to adjournment by June 6. That will be just three days before his colleagues on the other side of the Senate aisle will go to the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. The Roosevelt administration is thus counting on *Republican* support to adjourn Congress rather than to recess it. Both capitalist parties want to be free of embarrassing legislative debates and records during the election campaign. By June 6 the Administration wants to: (1) enact the relief bill, admittedly inadequate; (2) reduce the proposed tax on undivided corporation profits to a minimum; (3) rush through one of the four pending ship-subsidy bills. President Roosevelt is especially anxious to get a ship subsidy, a polite phrase for handing government money to the shipowners who are blacklisting and slugging striking marine workers and who want to continue low wages.

BORAH: A PROGRESSIVE PROGRESSING

Scott Johnston

On the eve of the Democratic national convention, the President receives certain distinguished visitors in the White House. These include Myron Taylor, president of J. P. Morgan's U.S. Steel Corporation; Walter Teagle, head of Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company; Owen D. Young of Morgan's General Electric Company; Walter Chrysler, automobile magnate. These men are Big Business; they are also financial and industrial partners and associates of Liberty League leaders.

In Congress and out of it, the Roosevelt-Farley machine makes one concession after another to the extreme reaction. Would not a strong Farmer-Labor bloc in the House and the Sen-

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ate counteract the pressure from the tories to some extent? Would it not compel the President to pay more attention to the needs of the American people as against the greed of Big Business?

Chicago—May 30

THE Minnesota Farmer - Labor Party has issued a call, signed by Governor Olson, urging various labor and progressive leaders throughout the country to meet in Chicago May 30-31. The invitation explains the purposes of the Chicago conference: (1) aid in the formation of local and state Farmer-Labor Parties: (2) preparedness for active participation as a national force in furthering the election of local, state and congressional candidates; (3) the unification of labor, farmer and progressive groups for the building of a national Farmer-Labor Party this year. The call states clearly that a third-party presidential ticket for 1936 will not be considered at the Chicago conference. Many shades of progressive opinion will be represented. The delegates, however, should have no difficulty in agreeing on one common task: a powerful Farmer-Labor Party is essential in order to combat the increasing danger of reaction.

No progressive or trade unionist can doubt that the Republican-Liberty-League-Hearst combination represents a marked movement toward fascism. But some labor leaders believe that Roosevelt will defend the American people against the growing reaction, and have announced that they support the President in the election campaign. It is hard to follow the reasoning of those who hold this view. Roosevelt cannot be dissociated from the Democratic Party which he heads. This party rests upon the support of the Southern tories who keep millions of Negro and white workers and farmers in virtual slavery. Furthermore, the Liberty League, controlled by the Morgans and the du Ponts, operates not only through the Republican Party, but also through the Democratic Party where it has its Al Smiths. The President himself has consistently made concessions to the extreme right wing of Big Business; he accepts the support of labor leaders without giving a single thing in return.

Under these circumstances, even those labor leaders and progressives who mistakenly support Roosevelt should see that a nationwide Farmer-Labor Party is indispensable. At this point only local and state Farmer-Labor officials and a Farmer-Labor bloc in Congress can give effective expression to the needs of the majority of the American people.

Labor leaders like John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman and David Dubinsky have stated that they will support Roosevelt without supporting the Democratic Party. This opens the way for them and those they influence to enter a Farmer-Labor Party which has no national ticket this year. If the Chicago conference issues a call for a national convention, it will be possible for those who disagree on Roosevelt but who agree on the need for fighting fascism to unite for a considerable measure of independent political action.

Gagging Teachers

TEACHERS in New York state may not use their minds; they may not be interested in social progress; they may not awaken their pupils to enlightened ideas. This is the opinion of the New York State legislature, which has passed the Hearst-inspired McNaboe resolution. On the surface, the resolution calls for an investigation of "Communistic" activities in New York's schools. Actually it is designed to cripple progressive education, to gag and penalize teachers who dare to differ with the tories on social security, child labor and free speech.

Dr. Harry Laidler, state chairman of the Socialist Party, described the McNaboe bill accurately when he said it was an effort by certain politicians to curry favor with the Red-baiting Hearst press and to divert attention "from the shameful record of the discredited Assembly on many needed social measures." He was right, too, in warning that the bill would develop "fascist and anti-semitic trends."

This opinion is shared by others who oppose the resolution, among them Mrs. Johanna M. Lindloff, member of the New York City Board of Education; Joseph Schlossberg, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; Dr. Bella Dodd, legislative representative of the Teachers' Union; Roger Baldwin, director of the American Civil Liberties Union. Liberals and labor leaders realize that unless widespread protest prevents Governor Lehman from signing the McNaboe Bill, the assault upon progressive education will be followed by similar attacks on the right of others to freedom of thought, expression and assembly.

Tory Tricks

THE tories know all the tricks of the parliamentary game. They rushed the McNaboe Bill through the New York State legislature in the early morning minutes of an all-night closing session. They picked an hour when public vigilance is off guard. The reactionary knows how to use last-minute confusion and fatigue to obtain repressive laws. This is what the Chambers of Commerce and the military clique who favor the anti-union Russell-Kramer Bill and the Tydings-McCormack Bill are counting upon. They will try to rush these dangerous laws through Congress at the last moments of the closing sessions.

The Tydings-McCormack Bill, which makes it a crime to criticize militarism, was actually sneaked through the Senate last year in the closing days of the session. It may be rushed through the House in the same way this June and the Russell - Kramer bill may similarly be rushed through both Houses unless progressives prevent it.

NEW MASSES readers have responded with remarkable promptness to our request for protests against the two reactionary bills designed to suppress freedom of speech and of organization on a nationwide scale. So far we have received more than 1,500 protests, and these have been forwarded to Washington. But more protests are needed. Additional protests may also remind Senator LaFollette that three months ago he promised to recall the Tydings-McCormack Bill from the House, thereby taking it out of the hands of the Hearst crowd in the lower chamber.

Industrial Union

THE interests that control the steel industry also back the campaign to destroy trade unions wherever they exist. The proper organization of America's key industry is thus of grave importance not only to steel workers but to every employed person in the United States.

When the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers opened its sixty-first convention three weeks ago at Canonsburg, Pa., it faced a decision which could mean the effective organization of workers in the industry or the continuation of the impotent craft-union policy which the reactionary officialdom upheld. The Committee for

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Industrial Organization, headed by John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, offered half a million dollars to assist the steel workers to form an industrial union and build its membership. William Green, president of the A.F. of L., countered by offering organizers pledged to maintaining the craft-union set-up.

The delegates voted progressively. While unable wholly to break through the opposition to Lewis, they adopted a resolution calling for organization of their industry on an industrial basis. This decision, if carried out immediately and resolutely, advances the entire American labor movement. Organization of steel along industrial lines will give leadership in the fight against those reactionaries in and out of the labor movement who wish at any cost to crush genuine trade unionism throughout the United States.

Drug Tycoons

LAST week the Proprietary Association of America held its fifty-fourth annual convention at the Biltmore Hotel. The Proprietary Association is a trade group made up of the big shots in the patent-medicine business. The convention discussed ways and means of protecting their racket from what the president of the Association, Frank A. (Castoria) Blair, calls "minority groups with selfish interests." Alarmed by the extent of the criticism recently levelled at even the "respectable" purveyors of patent medicines, the Castoria baron now calls for a united front of all reputable pink pill makers and advertisers. A strong defense must be set up against those "doleful authors who have found it profitable to attack our economic system."

When Blair, speaking for Castoria, Midol, Cascarets and a huge inventory of other harmful or useless drugs, protests that he has the consumers' welfare at heart, one is as little impressed as when Dr. George F. (Listerine) Reddish, head of the "Scientific Division" of the Association, states that "the present favorable state of the public health is due very largely to the wide use of antiseptics."

The truth is that patent-medicine manufacturers or vendors are not classifiable as "respectable" and "disreputable." From the most eminent member of the Proprietary Association to the humblest sidewalk pitchman the industry is one that we could well do without. It is estimated that $500,000,000 is wasted annually by the American public on worthless and harmful nostrums of one kind or another. And when the big shots in the Proprietary Association start a campaign to drive the pitchmen off the streets, as they have done recently, it is not so much because the pitchmen are a discredit to the industry, but because the big shots would like to see the $15,000,000 or $20,000,000 that is the pitchmens' annual share of the boodle diverted into what is virtuously called "legitimate drug channels."

Fit to Print?

WILLIAM WELLS, Negro, sixty-five years old, and his sister, Cora Wells, lived in a house near the cemetery at Gordonsville, Va. The two aged Negroes had no other home. Wells acted as caretaker of the cemetery. Mrs. George Zinn, a wealthy landowner, attempted to evict the old man and his sister. Wells refused to move. He had no other place to go.

Mrs. Zinn notified the sheriff who swore out a lunacy warrant. But when the authorities attempted to evict Wells and his sister, they defended themselves, barricading the house, threatening to shoot anyone who approached. The sheriff got too near. A bullet killed him. Thereupon, the town turned out for a Roman holiday—5,000 men and boys armed with rifles, machine guns, tear and sulphur gas. The siege started. Under cover of a machine gun, with the aid of searchlights provided by the fire department, the posse set the house on fire. The aged Negroes ran out, were wounded by the bullets, returned to the house for refuge. They finally burned to death. The mob, raking over the ashes after they had cooled, found the bones of the victims, divided them up as souvenirs.

The New York Times, reprinting an A.P. dispatch, retained all details of the shooting, omitted all mention of the reason — that the Negroes were threatened with eviction and a lunacy charge. It merely stated that Mrs. Zinn accused Wells of having "threatened her with a gun." In the South, this has only one implication. As an A.P. member, The Times has the right to print all or part of an A.P. dispatch so long as it does not change the wording. Careful cutting is a convenient way of giving the reader all the news which The New York Times sees fit to print.

Vatican's Business

THE Pope's lot has not been a happy one of late. He is the head of a big business which has been hard hit by the world-wide depression. His faithful hierarchs were once the biggest landowners in Mexico; they sent pesos regularly to the Holy See. Alas, the

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Mexican revolution stopped the lucrative source of income. Nor can the Holy See receive pious rubles from the Soviet Union. In Spain, the people's revolution has cut off the supply of pesetas; in the Argentine, the dough is too frozen to travel to Rome. Then Hitler's totalitarian heresy, which also needs money, cut down the Vatican's income from Bavaria. And all this on top of the New York stock market crash in which God's representative on earth lost who knows how many millions. Of course, filthy lucre isn't everything; there are spiritual consolations. But what can a poor Pope do when so many of his faithful will not follow his political line? Here is the Vatican pathetically devoted to Mussolini, condoning his savage war upon Ethiopia—which has the pleasant by-product of handing the rival Coptic church a sock in the solar plexus. And what do the faithful in Spain and France and Mexico? They enter into a People's Front against fascism! And with whom, beloved sons and daughters? With Socialists and Communists! *Sic transit gloria mundi,* we have fallen upon evil days, my children. Hearst and Hitler and Il Duce are right; the Communists are responsible for it all. Hence the Pope to the Hungarian delegations last week: "A common enemy threatens everyone and everything — Communism."

As a Big Businessman whose profits are threatened, the Pope sings the same tune, albeit in the pentatonic scale, as the Liberty League. But many Catholic workers, whose wages have been cut, whose hours have been lengthened, whose heads have been cracked by the employers' police in Spain, France, Latin America and also in the U.S.A., still favor the People's Front. They know from experience that the "common enemy which threatens everyone and everything" is fascism.

Britain and Central Europe

BRITAIN'S confused cabinet reflects the divisions of the governing class in regard to foreign policy. Many leading industrialists and bankers in Britain have a lukewarm feeling about Nazi Germany; some are even definitely pro-Hitler. The failure of the British cabinet to take decisive action against Italian aggression in East Africa and against Nazi aggression in the Rhineland zone has increased the war danger in Europe. Thanks to British policy, Hitler is now pushing ahead more or less openly with the illegal fortification of the Rhine, and with plans for a military adventure to the Southeast.

In France, the Flandin government (just defeated by the People's Front) has blamed British policy for Nazi victories. The Quai d'Orsay felt that Austria is already done for; that Jugoslavia is slipping into German commercial control; that Bulgaria is already in German hands; that the Greek premier is pro-German; that Germany already has 40 percent of Turkish trade.

The best informed European opinion is convinced that Austria is actually on the way to being dominated openly by Hitler. In the Balkans, key to Mitteleuropa and the Berlin-Bagdad, matters are at a standstill pending west-European developments. The Jugoslavian government is waiting to see how far Anglo-French-Soviet cooperation can maintain peace in eastern Europe. Many anti-fascists in Britain are convinced that Hitler plans not only to attack Austria and Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, but Great Britain, too. Hence they oppose the "purely western" security proposed by Hitler. Pro-British elements in the Balkans also oppose such one-sided "security" which plays directly into the hands of the fascist war-makers.

Prince Starhemberg

THE major powers are especially interested in Austria because it is the key to Central Europe, an important factor in preparations for the next war. The present government has been under the direct influence of Europe's two leading war-makers, Italy and Germany. Prince Starhemberg is openly fascist and pro-Italian; Chancellor Schuschnigg, for all his talk about Austrian independence, has hitched his political wagon to Hitler's star. Great Britain, anxious to maintain a "balance of power" in its own interests, recently sent Sir Austen Chamberlain to Vienna on a visit which was more than a pleasure trip. Britain wants Austria to remain independent in order to prevent Germany's planned imperial expansion; Hitler wants to annex Austria; Mussolini wants to dominate it.

The conflict between the major powers explains last week's break between fascist Prince Starhemberg and the Catholic-monarchist Chancellor. Starhemberg, Vice-Chancellor of Austria, wired Mussolini congratulating him on his triumph in Ethiopia. Great Britain, at odds with Italy over the East African question, brought pressure to bear upon the Austrian government to do something about Starhemberg. Austria had to listen, because she is dependent upon the League of Nations, in which Britain plays a leading role, for her post-war financial reconstruction. Prince Starhemberg was forced to resign as Vice-Chancellor; his private fascist army ordered demobilized. In Rome, to which he hastened for Mussolini's aid, the prince found little consolation. Il Duce realistically found the Schuschnigg regime quite satisfactory for his purpose and assured it of his friendship. Meantime, a princess of the Hapsburg clan, the sister of pretender Otto, came back to Vienna to "study political science."

The Schuschnigg regime, having gotten rid of Prince Starhemberg, continues to flirt with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy and to encourage the Hapsburgs to return to the throne. Last week's events have only emphasized the fact that Austrian fascism is neither able nor anxious to defend Austrian independence against Hitler or tear Austria away from Mussolini's orbit. Schuschnigg is as dangerous to the people of Austria as Starhemberg, for behind the Chancellor stand the fascist war-makers, the Vatican, the House of Hapsburg. These reactionary forces can be stopped in Austria only by a nation-wide anti-fascist movement which would remove the present regime and replace it with a People's Front government.

Political Killer

JUGOSLAVIA is the key country of the Balkans and the Little Entente. To control its policy, the fascists have not hesitated to kill leading political figures who stood in their way. In October, 1934, for instance, King Alexander of Jugoslavia and M. Barthou, French foreign minister, were assassinated in Marseilles. The killing was organized by Anton Pavelitch, former protege of Dr. Rosenberg, chief of the foreign department of the Nazi Party. More recently, Pavelitch was the pet of the Italian government. He was the acknowledged head of the gang of assassins, which was trained in the Hungarian camp at Zanka Puszta, received assistance from Munich and Milan, furnished the killer who murdered Alexander and Barthou.

By the time the leadership of the gang was traced to him, Pavelitch was safe in Italy. Mussolini's government refused to extradite him or his associ-

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"I COVER THE WATERFRONT"

Russell T. Limbach

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ate. Now he has been turned loose and is once more on the job. The news has created consternation in Jugoslavia. The well-directed political assassination of one or two pro-British and pro-French statesmen in Belgrade would considerably benefit the German Nazis, the Italian fascists and their Hungarian tools. It is reported that the Italian government has already tried to establish its own alibi for what may follow by explaining:

(1) It is unable to keep Pavelitch under surveillance because Il Duce has "no apparatus at its disposal for keeping people under observation";

(2) it cannot prevent Pavelitch from leaving Italy because his passport is in proper order.

Fascism obviously wants to clear all decks for action.

Secrecy

THE most sinister news from the Far East in a long time is the announcement of the Japanese Embassy in Shanghai that there will be no further statements regarding the strength of Japan's army in north China. Such complete secrecy is usually maintained only in war-time. Japan's preparations against China and the Soviet Union, encouraged by Italy's victory in Ethiopia, have reached a point where aggressive large-scale action is about to break. Japan is ready to complete annexation of the five North Chinese provinces which its armies have already penetrated. This would be an immediate prelude to an assault upon the Soviet Union.

Léon Blum's Government

RAOUL DAMIENS

PARIS.

IN a fortnight, Léon Blum becomes Premier of France. His government will be Socialist neither in immediate aim nor composition, as he reminded his hearers May 15 at the Victory Meeting held in Salle Wagram. The Socialists have emerged from the elections as the largest party and will head the Cabinet with the intention of executing their pledges contained in the People's Front program and in cooperation with the other parties pledged to that program.

"The voters have not given power to the Socialists nor to any other proletarian party," Blum told his audience. "Therefore, the government of the People's Front formed by the Socialists and the program applied will remain within the limitations of the capitalist regime. In achieving this program, it will lay the foundations for our own society. We have determined, whatever the Communist comrades decide to do, to work with them loyally, with as full confidence as if they had joined the ministry. Nobody can yet know the cabinet's composition. I don't know myself. You expect us to give you more than names. We will give deeds presently."

On May 17 at the Socialist Council, Blum indicated clearly that the immediate necessity was determined action. "The people," he said, "undeniably voted against fascism. The masses will permit no attack on democratic liberties. Now that we have won our victory, we must consolidate our gains. We must render a fascist assault impossible by reviving the republican spirit in the administration of government, ridding it of secret fascist auxiliaries."

At the present time the two most pressing tasks confronting the government are: purging the army, the civil service and government offices of reactionaries and enemies of the people, and preventing the capitalists from politically assaulting the People's Front by creating a panic. Action on this last problem has already been taken. The People's Front has declared its opposition to devaluating the franc, and has hinted to the bankers through Sarraut that if they undermine confidence in the People's Front, the new government will take office and apply a stringent program without waiting until June. This salutary warning has proved effective.

On the question of peace, Blum indicated in his American Club speech that though the People's Front is ready to cooperate with all regimes to prevent war, this does not indicate any intention of supinely accepting Hitler's or Mussolini's "accomplished-fact" tactics. In this connection, it is valuable to remember the phrase that Blum used in a previous statement, "We are determined to maintain peace with Hitler, without Hitler or against Hitler."

It is probable that Léon Blum will be Premier without portfolio. Vincent Auriol, the Socialist, will probably be Finance Minister; Herriot has been mentioned as Minister of Foreign Affairs; Daladier, as Minister of War; Cot, as Minister of Air; and Paul-Boncour, with possibly another Socialist Union man, will be included in the cabinet. The abstention of the Communists fully conforms with their campaign position and their earlier declarations, "Fullest support of the People's Front but no participation in the government at the present time."

Blum had hoped that the Communists would modify this attitude because the Cabinet will be headed by Socialists and not by Radical-Socialists. Last Thursday, Maurice Thorez in his address before a Communist Party mass meeting in Paris replied to Blum: "We want to insure at all costs the success of the People's Front parliament and government. We are, moreover, convinced that our participation in the Cabinet under present circumstances would not serve the cause of the People's Front but would furnish the pretext for a reactionary campaign of panic and misrepresentation which would weaken the People's Front forces among those who do not share our attitude. Therefore, the people's interest requires that we give the fullest uninterrupted support to the next Left government, guaranteeing the success of the People's Front through our mass backing.

"Our determination to continue and strengthen the local People's Front committees has already been exploited by the reactionary press which seeks to divide the People's Front. The press claims that such committees are revolutionary clubs, Soviets. Yet Chapter 2, Article 1, of the program of the People's Front subscribed to by all parties says, 'We call upon the people, particularly the laboring masses, to cooperate in the maintenance of peace organizations.' What better means is there of assuring this cooperation than through People's Front committees?"

Other declarations emphasize that the Communists are anxious for the Blum government to stay in power, that the danger of fascist assault has not been eliminated and therefore mass organizations and mass action are necessary to block such assaults.

Meanwhile, the reactionaries endeavor, despite their past failures, to divide the People's Front by flattering Blum as a moderate, thereby hoping to arouse Communist opposition; by intriguing in the Senate where the Radical-Socialists still are the largest party; by inventing imaginary differences in the interpretation by the various People's Front parties of their common porgram. These moves have been futile. The fullest harmony exists now as it has existed throughout the campaign. The People's Front marches united toward the realization of its program.

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What Is the People's Front?

GEORGE DIMITROV

IT IS not enough to wish for peace. We must struggle for it. General propaganda against war is absolutely insufficient. Propaganda against war "in general" does not at all deter the plotters in Berlin or Tokio from accomplishing their ends; it would satisfy them only too well if the working class went no farther than spreading general propaganda.

A successful struggle for preserving peace requires deliberate orientation of the joint efforts of the proletariat and the broadest masses against the real war-makers and against those forces in each country which directly or indirectly aid war. From this standpoint, it is of the greatest importance in each country to work out a specific, correct tactical line in the struggle for peace.

In countries where fascism is in power the working class realizes that the essence of the anti-fascist struggle lies in exposing chauvinist demagogy and war preparations. It therefore seeks to unite all forces which can prevent the catastrophe into which fascism is determined to plunge the people. In the struggle against fascist dictatorship and military aggression the proletariat and the broadest masses in Germany, Italy and other fascist countries act not only in their own interest but in the interest of peace, in the interest of all the peoples, of the whole of mankind.

An especially important problem in the tactic of the working-class, particularly in countries directly menaced by attack, is at present the attitude toward the governments' foreign policy and the defense of the country. Certainly it is not a matter of indifference to the working class and all laboring people what foreign policy the governments pursue in regard to the fascist enemies of peace; whether the governments patronize the agents of fascism or undertake effective steps against them; how the populations are safeguarded against the horrors of war, etc. To be indifferent to the question of the country's defense is to surrender such considerations to the control of the bourgeois governments. Such a position in no way assists the cause of peace. It is no accident that the upper layers of the governing bourgeoisie have always regarded this realm as their monopoly, as their "holy of holies." This bourgeois monopoly must be ended once and for all.

The proletariat cannot get along without its own independent policy on these questions. Under no circumstances permitting itself to slip into a bourgeois position, the party of the proletariat must with its own platform and its own demands, vigorously participate in matters of foreign policy and those affecting the country's defense.

As the intransigeant upholder of active defense of the people and the country against fascist enslavement, the working class must link the problem of defense with demands for broadening the democratic rights of workers and peasants and the defense of their vital interests. Its premise must be that democratization of the regime and the army, the exclusion from these of fascist and other reactionary elements, and the fulfilment of the most urgent demands of the worker and peasant masses are alone capable of strengthening the people's defense against fascist attack. Working-class representatives act properly when they support those measures which make it harder for bourgeois governments to capitulate to fascist aggressors, thereby betraying the freedom and independence of their people.

Communists emphasize that only the rule of the proletariat is capable of insuring reliable defense of a country and its independence, as demonstrated by the Soviet Union in a situation where there is a direct threat of war from fascist aggressors. At the same time they seek the creation of a People's Front government. Decisive measures against fascism and reactionary elements in the country, against the agents and collaborators of the enemies of peace, insure the control of the organized masses in the defense of the country. The People's Front government will encourage the development of the people's militant defense against fascist aggression.

Insofar as power is at present in the hands of bourgeois governments, there is no guarantee of genuine defense of the country; and insofar as the state's armed forces are used against laboring people, the working class cannot carry any political responsibility for measures of defense undertaken by such governments. Hence it opposes the military policies and military budgets of such governments. This does not preclude in specific cases a motivated abstention from voting on those individual measures of defensive character that are indispensable for making an attack by fascist aggressors more difficult (the fortification of borders, for example); as well as voting for and supporting such measures as are necessary for protecting the people against the horrors of war (refugees from gas attack, gas masks, first-aid services, etc.). The time is past when the working class does not participate independently and actively in the solution of such vital questions as war and peace. The difference between Communists and reformists, revolutionaries and reactionaries in the labor movement, does not at all consist in the fact that the latter participate in the solution of these problems while the revolutionaries remain on the sidelines. No, the difference is that the reformists, in these as in other matters, defend the interests of the capitalist class, while the Communists defend the interests of the working class, the interests of the people.

This flexible Bolshevik tactic, which is the application of a specific point in the general tactical formulation made by the 7th Congress of the Communist International, is necessarily conditioned by the entire present international situation, particularly by the presence of the various well-defined fascist aggressors.

It is comic to hear "left" phrase-slingers of various breeds oppose this tactic, masquerading as uncompromising revolutionaries. According to them, all governments are aggressors. They even attempt to fall back on Lenin who, during the imperialist war of 1914-18, rejected the arguments of the social chauvinists that "we have been attacked—we are defending ourselves." At that time the world was divided into two military imperialist coalitions, each of which sought world hegemony, each of which prepared and instigated the imperialist war. At that time there were no countries where the proletariat had triumphed, nor were there countries of fascist dictatorship.

Today the situation is different. Today there exist: (1) A proletarian state that is the greatest bulwark of peace; (2) definite fascist aggressors; (3) a number of countries under direct threat of fascist aggression and the loss of their state and their national independence; (4) other capitalist states which are at the moment interested in the preservation of peace. Consequently it is absolutely inaccurate to represent all nations as aggressors. Only people who try to cover up the actual aggressors can so pervert the facts.

THE existing peace is a bad sort of peace, but this bad peace is in any event better than war. Every consistent supporter of peace understands the necessity of backing all measures that help to preserve it, including measures adopted by the League of Nations, particularly sanctions. Sanctions can become an effective instrument against the aggressor nations.

If the sanctions undertaken by the League of Nations did not hinder Italy in the war against Ethiopia, this is no condemnation of sanctions, but rather a condemnation of the powers that undermined their application.

And if German fascism today challenges the entire world it is because it believes that it can get away with it, it is because sanctions were not applied against Japan, it is because sanctions against Italy were sabotaged by capitalist countries and, lastly, it is because when Hitler moved his troops to the borders of France and Belgium he was convinced in advance that the application of

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sanctions against him would be sabotaged by the English ruling class.

They say that the application of sanctions increases military danger, that they ultimately lead to war. This is not so. Quite the contrary, the aggressor's success increases the danger of war. The more firmly sanctions of a financial-economic character are applied against fascist aggressors (complete refusal of credits and cessation of trade and deliveries of raw materials) the less intent will German fascism be on starting a war involving far greater risks.

The League of Nations must be mercilessly criticized for its waverings, passivity and inconsistency. The working class wages an uncompromising struggle against the governments of those imperialist states which, while members of the League, allow their predatory ambitions to assist the aggressor, to sabotage steps for the preservation of peace and to sacrifice the interests of small nations to those of the great imperialist powers.

From this, however, it does not follow that we must take a generally negative attitude toward the League of Nations. Why should the proletariat play into the hands of the war-makers who are now all opposing the League? On the one hand, precisely those who are the main instigators of war—Germany and Japan—have left the League; on the other hand, the League contains the Soviet Union which throws its entire international influence on the side of peace and collective security. In the League are also other states which have no wish to provide fascist aggressors with an opportunity to attack other peoples. Whoever is unable to make a distinction between the League of Nations in the past and the League today, whoever cannot differentiate between various members of the League, whoever renounces the pressure of the masses upon the League and on the separate capitalist governments to preserve peace simply chatters and is no revolutionary, no proletarian statesman.

The working class must support those measures of the League of Nations and the separate states which are truly designed to preserve peace (pacts of non-aggression and mutual assistance against the aggressor, pacts of collective security and financial-economic sanctions). Not only must such action be supported, but mighty mass anti-war movements must be utilized to compel the League as well as the governments of the separate countries to take serious measures for the defense of peace.

It is incorrect to think that the policy of constant concession to the demands of the fascist instigators of war on the part of the League of Nations and on the part of separate countries (England, France, Belgium, etc.) can help the preservation of peace. Workers have not forgotten that in a certain period in Germany's internal policy, conciliation and capitulation before the advance of fascism cleared the road for fascism to seize power. In the international arena such a policy of capitulation frees the hands of fascism.

It is also incorrect to believe that the cause of peace will gain by considering at this time the question of redistributing the sources of raw materials, colonies and regions under mandates, as the reactionary social-democratic leaders do. In substance, this is done with the aim of distracting the attention of the masses from the war-makers. At the same time such a proposal conceals a desire to provide German fascism with its share of colonies which would reinforce even more strongly its military position. It is not the proletariat's business to favor one or another kind of distribution of colonies and mandates among the imperialists. The proletariat's task is to support the struggle of colonial peoples for their interests and rights and for their final liberation from the imperialist powers.

THE demand by the proletariat that the League of Nations and bourgeois governments take effective measures against fascist aggression does not for a moment obscure the most important element in preserving peace, the basic and decisive element, the independent action of the broad masses in defense of peace.

There is not the slightest doubt that if the international proletariat, with its mass organizations, particularly organizations of trade unions, would have acted in a united manner and by means of strikes and other actions would not have allowed a single ship to sail to or from Italy, a single train to move, Italian fascism would long ago have been confronted with the necessity of terminating the robber war against the Ethiopian people.

But the creation of a truly broad People's Front for peace, sufficiently powerful to wage such a struggle against militant fascism, is possible only if proletarian unity of action is achieved. It is precisely the establishment of this unity of the working class that has given the French and Spanish proletariat the opportunity to create a mighty anti-fascist People's Front.

Torn by inner contradictions, the London conference of the Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions with headquarters at Amsterdam, passed over, because of pressure from the reactionary wing, the question of the necessity for immediate realization of unified action by the proletariat on a national and international scale. The conference did not summon the working masses to independent action. It confined itself to calling for complete dependence on the League of Nations. It did not rise to the defense of the Chinese people subjected to attack from Japan. It failed to condemn those Laborites and Social-Democratic leaders who came out in defense of the aggressive policy of German fascism, masking that defense with phrases about "preservation of peace."

Nevertheless, there has been developing in the ranks of the Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions a movement in favor of the united front of the working class. The fundamental interests of the entire international proletariat demand that these forces emerge victorious and overcome the resistance of those opposing the united front. The shift in fascism to a stage of military advance utilizes dissension in the parties and organizations of the working class of separate countries and thus renders most urgent the need for a unified international policy of the working class in the interests of preserving peace.

Briefly then, the realization of this unified international policy of the proletariat is possible on the following premises:

First of all, restoration and reinforcement of actual international proletarian solidarity for the defense of the interests of the widest strata of the laboring populations; a decisive break by the Social-Democratic parties with the imperialist interests of their bourgeoisie.

Second, all possible support of the peace policies of the Soviet Union, the proletarian state that unshakably guards peace among nations. This presupposes above all else a determined struggle of all workers' parties against any counter-revolutionary attempts to identify the Soviet Union's foreign policy with that of imperialist states, to identify the Red Army, bulwark of peace, with the armies of the imperialist countries—attempts playing into the hands of the fascist war-makers.

Third, singleness of purpose and concentrated blows against the fascist aggressor; a different attitude toward the aggressor on the one hand and to the victims of aggression on the other; the exposure of every attempt to obscure the difference between fascist and non-fascist states.

Fourth, the proletariat's independent struggle for peace, independent both of the capitalist governments and of the League of Nations, a struggle that would prevent the subordination of the labor movement to the concealed combinations of the imperialist governments participating in the League.

Under present conditions the struggle for the preservation of peace is the struggle against fascism and it is substantially a revolutionary struggle.

The preservation of peace threatens fascism with extinction: as it increases fascism's internal difficulties it undermines the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The preservation of peace furthers the growth of the forces of the proletariat, the forces of revolution, it aids in healing the break in the ranks of the labor movement; it assists the proletariat in becoming the guiding class in the struggle of all laboring people against capitalism; it cracks the foundations of the capitalist structure; it hastens the victory of socialism.

STALIN has pointed out that "war can flare up unexpectedly. Nowadays wars are not declared, they are simply begun."

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This requires of Communists above all a clear understanding of the extent and character of the war danger and the ways and means of coping with it.

A decisive step toward action by the international proletariat against the war makers is today the development by the Communist Party in each country of a most vigorous, persistent and undisguised campaign in all aspects of social and political life for the preservation of peace. The Communists conduct this campaign even before agreements are reached with the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party; but they conduct it of course with a view toward unity of action between the Communist and Socialist parties. The Communists exert all their energies to overcoming the resistance of the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders to the united front; they seek to support as much as possible the common struggle against the common foe.

Such a campaign for the unity of Communists and Socialists will assist the activization and solidarity of all forces of the proletariat, not only on a national but on an international scale. This will powerfully stimulate the influx into the movement of other sections of the urban and rural working population, the masses of the lower middle class, farmers and professionals, all supporters of peace. This will hasten the formation of an invincible fighting force of the international proletariat, of all who work, of all peoples for the preservation of peace.

The struggle for peace is the struggle against fascism, against capitalism, the struggle for the triumph of socialism in the entire world.

Spain Advances

ILYA EHRENBOURG

"LONG LIVE ASTURIAS!" I saw these words painted on the walls of Madrid skyscrapers and on fences in remote villages of Castille. Thousands of people, gathered in huge meetings, repeated "Long live Asturias!" It was shouted by the delegates from the village of Melapique who had come to town on the back of a donkey.

"Long live Asturias!" With these words Spain, bewitched by monks, chained by gendarmes, fooled by the Zamoras and robbed by the Lerrouxes, awakened.

The train was cutting through mountains. It was speeding past narrow passes, valleys covered with snow and villages that resembled Caucasian *auls*. Then it became darker: faintly the stones of Oviedo were beginning to become visible.

There are names that never fail to stir us. It matters little to me that Oviedo was built in the thirteenth century, that it is famous for its ancient relics and munitions plant. It matters little to me that Perez de Ayala was born in this city. I remember only one thing: on these streets the workers of Asturias fought and died.

Early in the morning, under the drizzling rain, the ruins of the courthouse, the university, the high school and the theater look particularly sad. Gil Robles' government spent quite a bit on the "resurrection of Oviedo." But the money went to the landlords who have built new and more profitable houses. Neither the university nor the theater was of any interest to the gendarmes and Jesuits. In the fifteen months of their reign they found no time to think about the fate of art and science.

One of the suburbs of Oviedo is called La Cabana. It is inhabited by laborers, ragpickers and small gardeners. . . .

A hovel without windows. The floor is earthen. Children move about in the darkness. In this hovel lives the washerwoman, Marina Alvarez. An officer of the foreign legion led away her two sons. Abelino was nineteen years old; Jose, seventeen. Together with four other inhabitants of La Cabana they were placed against the wall of the Church of San Pedro and shot. With their last pennies, Marina and the four widows bought a wreath of gladioli and hung it up on the wall shot through with bullets. Underneath it they wrote: "Six inhabitants of La Cabana were killed here." The Civil Guards tore off the flowers and erased the inscription. Marina Alvarez was left with four little children. She could not feed them. An officer of the Civil Guards brought her a paper to sign: "I affirm that my sons Abelino and Jose were killed by revolutionists."

"Sign this paper," said the officer, "and we shall give you relief."

Marina Alvarez threw the paper down on the floor and replied: "Never."

Before the October events Marina Alvarez was just a washerwoman from La Cabana. Today, when she has the fifteen centimos she buys a *Mundo Obrero*. Now she lives for the future. She pointed to her children and said: "I live for them. I know that in the Soviet Union the children are being fed and educated." She raised her fist and was followed by four widows and seventeen children.

I saw the monastery of Adoratrices. In the basement of this monastery the Civil Guards tortured workers. They played gramophones so that the workers' outcries would not be heard by outsiders. The monks of the monastery said *Ave Maria,* the gramophones played fox-trots and the workers, hanging with their heads down, were groaning in their last throes.

On the outskirts of Villafria lives Severina Gonzales. The "pacifiers" broke into her house. Josefa, Severina's daughter, was nursing a child. The officer noticed Josefa and threw a hand-grenade at her. Josefa fell dead.

The officer ordered: "Take the man along." They led away Severina's husband Joacim, her son Selso and her son-in-law German. That night they were shot. The Government took pity on Severina and gave her sixty pesetas as compensation—twenty pesetas for each of the murdered men. The soldiers destroyed Severina's furniture and killed her chickens. On the wall of her little house they inscribed the following: "This house was captured by the legionnaires of the first regiment, Fifth Battalion. Long live Spain. Long live the Foreign Legion! Down with Communism! Cablo Valles."

I have in front of me the photograph of a fair-haired youth. It is the photograph of Valentino Fernandez de la Riva, the barber. Valentino, chained to other prisoners, was led through the streets of Oviedo. His mother saw him and threw herself at the feet of the officer: "What are you going to do to him?" The officer smiled politely: "We shall probably kill him." The barber was taken to the outskirts of the city and burned alive.

Ramon Mendez was seventeen years old. He was tortured until he lost his mind. Then they killed him. The caretaker of the cemetery asked for a certificate of death. The soldiers did not care to bother. They threw Ramon's body down a narrow mountain pass. Three months later the warden of the jail notified his mother that Ramon had died of heart failure.

THE journalist Francisco Carames showed me a photograph that had been snapped by a Red Cross worker: officers, sergeants and "sisters of mercy" are amusing themselves: one dances over a freshly-dug grave, another skips over a dead body. This is incredible. It is hard to believe and yet it is true. These officers, these sergeants and "sisters of mercy" may be counted as human beings when a census is taken but one cannot write books about them; no tears will be shed over them when they are led to the gallows.

"The Guardians of Tradition": they killed children in the name of the past, in the name of Spain's history, her sanctity, her antiquity. The workers of Oviedo, they say, are "vandals" (it seems that while defend-

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ing themselves the Red Guards destroyed a few ancient monuments). Yes; the life of a human being is dearer to us than all the ancient relics. But we also value the past. The chairman of the municipal Soviet of the village of Escalon, a farmhand and a Communist, showed me a manuscript of the twelfth century. His predecessor, a fascist and a "guardian of traditions," threw it out into the street. The farmhand said: "We shall send this manuscript to the museum."

The "pacifiers" of Oviedo placed a machine gun in the belfry of the Gothic church. The proximity of the cross did not restrain Gil Robles' soldiers. For twelve days they shot at the inhabitants of Oviedo from this belfry. They destroyed one of the finest relics of Roman art—the church of Santa Cristina de Lena which was erected in the ninth century. They hate the present and are indifferent to the past: the march of history is outside their consciousness. They value only their privileges, their estates and their rank. That is why they killed three thousand people in Asturias and placed thirty thousand behind bars.

Where are they now, the executioners, the masters of torture, the captains of the Civil Guards who stuck pins under the nails of the prisoners—the brave legionnaires who threw grenades at defenseless women? Some of them escaped to Portugal or Biarritz; others "serve" safely in Morocco where they shoot natives on holidays. A few of them are still here. Gil Robles and Alejandro Lerroux are still free. Gil Robles hires killers, makes sweet speeches in the Cortes and runs to church to beg the Holy Virgin for a miracle that would save all the "Senbrito" of Spain.

Doval, who tortured the workers in the Monastery of Adoratrices and played the gramophone in order to drown out the cries of pain, is now on service abroad. Caballero, the captain of the guards, who is notorious as the inventor of the most ingenious methods of torture, is resting in Madrid. "El Pichilatu"—the "little louse"—who is responsible for the death of fifteen miners, drinks Jerez in the cafes of Oviedo. Dark days, however, are in store for the "pacifiers." On April 21, upon orders from Madrid, the police arrested more than a hundred hangmen. Once more, the hangmen saw the chambers where a year and a half ago they tortured the workers. They have much to remember, the executioners. So have the workers.

After the October struggles, a regiment of Catalonian Civil Guards was stationed in Asturias. They were sent to this region of poverty as punishment for their lack of zeal in suppressing the revolutionists. Now the Catalonians have been ordered back to Barcelona. Before leaving Asturias they went to the International Labor Defense and said: "Give us a document that would testify to the fact that we have not mistreated the workers here. Otherwise, we are afraid to show ourselves in Barcelona. . . ." They no longer dream of high rank and decorations but of a stamp with a hammer and sickle on it.

On the eighteenth of February there were nine hundred prisoners in the Oviedo jail. The workers gathered at the gates of the jail. They shouted: "Amnesty!" The Communist woman, Pasionaria (she is the daughter of a miner and the wife of a miner) was at the head of the procession. The jail guards trained their machine guns on her. Pasionaria went to the governor: "Free the prisoners at once." The governor replied: "I obey the law only. Unless the crowd disperses, the captain will order the soldiers to shoot." The workers did not move. Instead, Pasionaria ordered the soldiers to stand at ease and they obeyed her. Pasionaria entered the jail and opened the gates. The first to come out were the prisoners who had been sentenced to death. They were followed by those who were serving life sentences. Then came the rest. When the last prisoner had passed through the gates, Pasionaria appeared holding a large rusty key. She showed the key to the crowd and said: "The jail is empty." The liberated men and women marched through the streets of the city which in October, 1934, they had defended against the civil guards and legionnaires. They marched and sang the International. The people of Oviedo answered with "Long Live Red Asturias."

On April 12, in the city park of Oviedo, more than ten thousand workers gathered. They came to greet the leaders of the October struggles who had just returned from a visit to the Soviet Union. Here was the worker from the munitions factory, Silverio Fernandez, who had been the commandant of the northern railway station. Here was the Socialist and retired sergeant, Francisco Dutor. They greeted the workers of Oviedo in the name of the Soviet workers. The people replied: "Viva la Rusia."

I spent an evening with them. Simply and without braggadocio, they recounted deeds which may be rightly called heroic. The worker of the munitions factory, Laureano Suarez, was manning a canon. He was wounded in the foot but he did not leave his post. His comrade, Antonio Ocejo, and thirty workers, armed with rifles, took the hill of San Pedro which was defended by the civil guards with machine guns.

The miner Silverio Castenon is still very young. He was the chairman of the Turon revolutionary committee. Turon has 17,000 inhabitants and 5,000 of them volunteered to defend the pass of Campo Manes. Silverio Castenon is a poet. He wrote two books. He is familiar with old Castilian poetry as well as with the poetry of Rafael Alberti. He is in love with Cervantes and Tolstoy. At his trial he surprised the brave generals; he quoted in his speeches Marx, Kant, Hugo and Calderon. The brave generals shook their heads approvingly but sentenced him, nevertheless, to death. I ask him: "How many months did you wait for death?" He smiles with the bashful smile of a poet and adolescent. He replies: "Fifteen. But not for death—for the revolution."

Aida Lafuente, a young Communist, was seventeen years old. The workers of Oviedo nicknamed her Libertaria. She died fighting. Her relatives have preserved her dress that is shot through with bullets. They intend to send it to Moscow to the Museum of Revolution. On April 12, the young Communists and the young Socialists of Oviedo hung up a little board: "The Street of Aida Lafuente."

HILLS. A winding road covered with grass. Through this road the miners of Sama, Mieres and Turon came to Oviedo. They fought at every turn of it.

Sama is a city of miners. It is black and gloomy. Even the river is black from coal. After the October fights, the Spanish fascists decided to defeat Red Asturias through a boycott: they began to use English coal. These "patriots" said: "It is better to be without our own coal and without our own revolution." The miners of Sama work three days a week. They feed on soup which tastes like water. In the center of Sama are ruins. These are the armories of the civil guards. One hundred and ninety guards fought desperately here, waiting for reinforcements. The battle lasted two hours. The miners won.

After the February elections the miners of Sama dug out their hidden rifles and cleaned and oiled them.

It was in Sama that I met Fernando Rodriguez. I regret that I do not write poetry. I should like to describe the deeds of this metal worker, Fernando Rodriguez, as the poets describe the deeds of Cid Campeodore. Fernando Rodriguez is the author of the decree that created the Red Army. He was the last to give up. Gil Robles' soldiers tortured him. They hung him up by his hands and then pulled his feet. They call this form of torture the "airplane". Boiling water and ice-cold water were poured alternately over his naked body. They told him: "Tell us where your arms are hidden and we shall let you go." He, too, never said a word.

Fernando was freed from jail together with the other workers. The moment he was free he took a rifle in his hand.

He smiled as he spoke to me about the tortures that he had undergone. He explained to me the technique of the hangmen. He took me to the Hall of Trade Unions. This hall the "pacifiers" had turned into a jail. The prisoners were kept in the basement; the torture chambers were upstairs. Traces of bullets: here miners were shot. I saw on the walls spots of blood: the names of miners written in blood. I saw crippled bodies of miners. I don't know of a more horrible place than the Trade Union Hall in Sama. Fernando Rodriguez related: "Here I stepped over a body . . . here I was hung

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on the door." When we left, he raised his fist high: "Unios, Hermanos Proletarios."

Clumsy and beautiful are the proclamations written by the miners. Here is a manifesto of the revolutionary committee of the village of Grado:

> Comrades, we create a new society. Birth is always accomplished through pain. Death gives birth to life. Soldiers of a great ideal, fight until you are victorious. Your brothers, in thousands of cities and villages, will fight together with you. Women, in the name of your children, help us. Everyone into the fight. We are going to create a Red army. We summon everyone from seventeen to forty. Brothers, the whole world looks at us. The life of Spain's workers depends upon our victory. Russia, the fatherland of the proletariat, will help us erect upon our ruins the foundations of Marxism.

Mieres, like Sama, is a large mining village. It is here that the fighting slogan U.H.P. was raised. From the very outset the miners of Mieres captured the reins of government. "U.H.P." was their password.

A year and a half passed, and today all of Spain repeats these three letters: *"U.H.P. —Unios, Hermanos Proletarios"*—Unite, Proletarian Brothers!

On the streets of Mieres one can still see traces of Gil Robles' bombardment of the city. On the walls of the houses where the widows and orphans live, faded posters announce: "Vote for Gil Robles. He will save you from Revolution." Had I not seen Gil Robles in person I would have thought that he was a jokester. That, however, is not the case: he is a fat and humorless bourgeois. He actually believes that the inhabitants of the cities he had destroyed should come to him and say: "Come and save us from revolution." In Mieres only three percent of the voters voted for him, gendarmes, spies, hangmen and a few old ladies who were scared by the priests.

The workers' club at Mieres has a large library. It was the only thing saved from the punitive expeditions of the "guardians of tradition." The librarian told me that the Soviet writers are the most popular among his readers. I saw in the catalog the names of Gorki, Babel, Gladkov, Zoshchenko, Ivanov, Ilf and Petrov, Katayev, Leonov, Seifulina, Pilnyak, Fadeyev, Fedin, Sholokov and Ehrenbourg.

I was sitting with miners of Mieres in a small restaurant. We were talking about past and future battles. They said that the mine owners were getting ready for a lockout but that the miners were getting ready to take over the mines. They spoke about the United Front between Socialists and Communists; about the theaters in Moscow; about battles amidst mountain passes, and about Alexei Stakhanov. A Civil Guard entered the restaurant. He wanted to have some wine. Upon noticing the miners, however, he walked out in confusion.

The miner, Jose Benito, was eighteen years old when he went to fight in the mountains. He was taken prisoner. The soldiers tied him to a wagon and used him as a shield against his own comrades' bullets. But Jose had luck. The miners' bullets missed him. He was finally sentenced to death but later his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He was kept in the prison of Pampelone. Two of his comrades died in jail from hunger and torture. He remained alive. He laughs now and jokes: "Now it is their turn to give up."

About twenty or thirty miners saw me off at the railroad station of Mieres. When they took leave of me they raised their fists: "U.H.P." Two women who were sitting in my compartment turned pale.

Night again. Mountains. Snow. I am thinking about cruelty and heroism. No: the miners of Asturias did not lose their fight. Naive people think that it is merely a change in the cabinet that is now taking place in Spain: the defeat of the monarchy, a Left cabinet, a Right cabinet, the revolt of Asturias, elections and again a Left cabinet. Few realize that a real revolution is now taking place in Spain. It began five years ago, timidly and hesitatingly. It commenced with a few speeches by lawyers and a few scattered shots. Its first period of timidity is over. The revolution is now armed.

Spain was saved from fascism not by the February revolution but by the October struggles. The miners of Sama and Mieres freed Companies from jail and gave power to Azana. The dead liberated the living. The ruling class's tragedy lies in the fact that it is no longer able to win battles. Even its victories become defeats.

Gil Robles' guns and airplanes destroyed not only the houses of miners but also the Spain of landlords, jesuits and generals. The new Spain, from Biscay to Extramadura, repeats in one voice: "U.H.P. Long Live Asturias!"

Sense of Humor

Never become fanatically serious about hard times.
Keep a "sense of humor,"
Heh, heh.

If you haven't enough belly to ripple outwardly,
If your navel would flop rawly against your *backbone,*
Heh, heh, heh,
Chuckle anyway,
Have the "saving grace of humor."

With grim resolution
Remain loyal to the "American flair for humor,"
Heh, heh, heh, heh.

Roosevelt smiling,
Depression laughed off;
Humor in his heaven,
All well with America,
Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh.

One worsening opiate,
One escape from reality:
Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh.
(Once more now, six chuckles this time) . . .

Ugh!

Look out,
Lest even Fascism
Furnish even the Yankees
With at least a respite from "humor"!

H. H. Lewis.

False Dawn

Like a widespread conflagration,
like a large city set on fire,
clouds reflect the yellow rush
of molten steel at night.

You, friend, as your train rounded
East Chicago or Gary
have wondered at this outburst—
It is the dawn in the night
of the last shift workers' day.

Stepan Stepanchev.

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"It Can't Happen To Me"

BRUCE MINTON

EVER since THE NEW MASSES appeared as a weekly publication, it has pointed out that all middle-class groups are in the same boat as the working class. They suffer from the same economic pressures. Their civil rights are withheld in substantially the same manner. They must organize in the same way as workers in industry for self-protection through struggle. And they will meet the same opposition—from employers, from federal and state authorities, from the police.

In New York City, in the short space of two days, workers, professionals, white-collar employes and intellectuals found that in the eyes of the police who act for Big Business they are all identical, all "trouble-makers." For each group dared to organize, to fight for better wages or better working conditions or for the right to work. Police charged their lines, beat women and men, no matter what their occupation. To a cop with orders to "break it up," the artists and the seamen, the white-collar clerks and the professionals are all pickets to be scattered and bruised. Those among the artists who believed that they were "different" from the seamen quickly learned that a night club brought down hard feels pretty much the same despite so-called "psychological" differences arising from the dissimilarity of their occupations. Each isolated group is an easy target for the police. The mass of workers—professional or intellectual or manual, many of whom believed that "it can't happen to me"—are united by the necessity of struggle against the attempt to smash their organizations, the attempt to keep all workers "submissive."

THE professionals who picketed the Polyclinic Hospital protested a ten-percent wage cut. Some salaries had been reduced to the starvation rate of $50 a month. The pickets marched before the hospital in an orderly fashion. Suddenly they were attacked by the police, manhandled, one hundred of them forced into patrol wagons and taken into custody. The hospital workers will be tried for "disorderly conduct" and perhaps a few will be charged with "rioting."

In front of Ohrbach's Department Store in Union Square, the mass picket line of white-collar workers and their sympathizers protested the lockout of union members. As is the case in almost every instance when they are attacked, the picket line chanted and marched before the store in an orderly fashion. The mounted police—the same who had just returned from the waterfront where they had clubbed over fifty strikers—charged into the white-collar workers. They flailed about with their clubs. They beat women who sympathized with the strikers. They arrested pickets. They treated the white-collar pickets in the same brutal way they had treated the seamen on the waterfront—viciously, with all the savage force and desire violently to crush the store employes that they had used just an hour before against workers in another industry.

Nor are artists separate or immune. In the building that houses the Federal Artists Project, artists and models asked for employment, the stoppage of dismissals. They walked

into the building and demanded jobs, the right to eat. Like the shipowners, the head of the project explained that workers—even those who paint pictures—have no rights, should make no "demands." When the artists refused to take this answer and camped in the building until they were given jobs on federal projects designed to put artists to work, the director acted as the shipowners, the head of the department and the superintendent of the hospital had acted. She saw to it that she got police "protection." The police ejected the artists, clubbed several, kicked others or pounded them with fists. When the artists again picketed the office of the project director, the police grew more violent. The artists, like the professionals and white-collar workers and seamen, faced the open terror of LaGuardia's police.

On the waterfront, within walking distance of Ohrbach's and of the building that houses the Federal Artists Project, the seamen met with the like terror. Here the issue was even broader. Seamen are workers in a basic industry. Their militant revolt against reactionary union officials who act as lackeys for the employers points the way to organization that can make the struggles of the white-collar workers, the intellectuals, the professionals more effective. They are the spearhead of the workers' battle for better living standards. If they win, workers will receive leadership that brings with it economic gains for the employe and less profit for the employer, no matter what his business, no matter how he makes his profit.

TWICE in one week, the New York police attacked the seamen's picket lines. On Monday, May 11, they charged on motorcycles, clubbing unarmed, orderly men, tear-gassing them, arresting approximately 250, of whom all but six were immediately released and only one was held over for trial. The following Saturday, the police again rode into the pickets, this time on horses. They beat men and women, injuring several strikers seriously, wounding over fifty.

The police attack follows the defeat of every attempt by reactionary officials of the International Seamen's Union and the shipowners to break the seamen's strike. Events of the past two weeks show that the police brutality followed the failure of all other efforts to smash the strike.

The Pacific Coast Maritime Federation successfully resisted the shipowners' offensive. The San Francisco local of the longshoremen's union defeated the move to isolate it from the rest of the West Coast; militant rank-and-file leaders, instead of being discredited, received the full support of the membership.

On the East Coast, the temporary injunction suit brought by the reactionary I.S.U. leadership to restrain Joseph Curran and others from using the union's name in any manner and enjoining the membership from strike action fell through. The final trial on the injunction suit comes up in October.

The seamen's defense was based on a general denial that they had made improper use of the union name or that they had been guilty of violence. They counter-charged that the I.S.U. officials came into court with unclean hands. The officials had negotiated the present 1936 contract with the shipowners in the face of protests and objections by the great majority of the membership. Furthermore, the I.S.U. officials refused to submit the new 1936 agreement to the membership for approval. The officials had also disrupted membership meetings, failed to hold them as provided by the union constitution and refused to make any effort to adjust or arbitrate grievances.

Judge Black, before whom the case was tried, stated that the strikers had an absolute right to describe themselves as "striking members of the I.S.U." He offered to act as mediator in the dispute between the officialdom and the membership. The strikers agreed; after much hesitation, David Grange,

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spokesman of the officialdom, also accepted.

On Judge Black's recommendation, both sides tentatively approved a settlement which provided:

> (1) Reinstatement of all men;
> (2) Neither side would take disciplinary action against the other and no expulsions would follow;
> (3) No blacklist;
> (4) The I.S.U. would call a referendum on the 1936 agreement;
> (5) Neither side would make any statement commenting on the agreement pending final settlement.

Grange guaranteed acceptance by the union of the terms and further promised to come before the next membership meeting, at which time he would promise that if the agreement did not go through he would resign his $10,000-a-year job.

But the next day, Grange met secretly with the shipowners at their offices on 11 Broadway. There he learned that the shipowners forbade the I.S.U. to accept Judge Black's agreement. By maneuvering, Grange managed to have Ivan Hunter, official of the I.S.U., wire from San Francisco demanding that Judge Black's agreement be repudiated. Grange thereupon violated his promise to the Judge by giving a press statement stating that he would fight the strikers "to the finish." The I.S.U. officialdom, supposedly representing the membership, had thus proved itself under the complete domination of the shipowners.

To show their good faith, the strikers accepted the Judge Black agreement. On May 4, the injunction hearing was resumed. Grange admitted that he signed the 1936 agreement with the shipowners despite full knowledge that it violated the express wishes of the men. He excused himself by saying that he intended to ask for overtime and other important demands *after* the contract was signed. But then he also admitted that he had no expectation that the shipowners would grant such demands.

Grange refused to answer questions concerning subsequent meetings with the shipowners on the grounds that the answers would "incriminate and degrade" him. When the I.S.U.'s star witness was indicted for larceny, Grange's case collapsed and he withdrew his request for a temporary injunction.

Grange then expelled Joseph Curran and eighteen other strike leaders from the I.S.U. —without explanation and without trial.

The shipowners and the I.S.U. officialdom again raised the Red scare.

Every move to kill the strike had failed. The shipowners had received full cooperation from the I.S.U. officialdom in the attempt to prevent the membership from gaining higher wages, pay for overtime, better working conditions. And with no other hope of smashing the strike, the police suddenly began to club and beat and arrest the pickets. The excuse for the two brutal attacks was that the pickets had stepped beyond an imaginary line on the street set by the police. Both attacks occurred without warning.

And the attacks occurred at a time when the only conclusion possible is that the police had responded to pressure from the shipowners and the union officials to smash the strike by violence.

The owners and the I.S.U. officials have the full cooperation of Mayor LaGuardia's police. The right to picket is endangered. Against this violation of civil liberties, middle-class organizations have joined the seamen. The American League Against War and Fascism, the International Labor Defense, the League of Women Shoppers, the Citizens' Committee to Aid Striking Seamen, the Catholic Workers and many other organizations have offered full support.

ON four fronts, in two days, the police have smashed into defenseless men and women, have beaten them. In one case, a man was so seriously injured that he was in danger of death. The drive in New York City has gained headway. It is an "illegal" drive. The police have no "right" to club or arrest the pickets. But they cannot be stopped by protesting the illegality of their actions. They can be stopped only by organized pressure from all workers, from the clerks and the artists and the professionals and the seamen, one supporting the other, each ahead to build strong trade unions.

President Ryan of the Internation shoremen's Association and head of tral Trades and Labor Council app police violence. But President R trade-union official who looks upo ganization of workers as a racket. more than anything else, the loss o with its $15,000-a-year remunerat lost control of the West Coast. men's fight against their corrupt activates the longshoremen and thus Ryan's last stronghold, the East Co does not want to lose the friendsh shipowners, his ability to "cooperate" right people. Ryan uses the full of his position to prevent the tra from supporting the seamen's strike.

But with the new offensive agai ers launched through the police, brutal drive to break their orga their ability to picket and strike, labor movement has primary rights Police violence threatens their civil the very life of their organizations the seamen's fight and the Ohrbach fight is met by brutal force, so labor movement is endangered if are allowed to continue violently strikes and picket lines. The la ment, despite its Ryans, must join

"It's time we looked up what Karl Marx says about it."

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Senator Bo

BETTY

DEBIT		CREDIT
LABOR		
In his first legal case defended the murderer of a Chinese. The judge said it wasn't murder to kill a Chinaman and Borah won the case.		Gave free legal advice to his Chinese cook and friends.
Prosecuted Bill Haywood, helping the western mine operators crush unions.		Said unions were fine -- except for the Western Federation of Miners.
As a corporation lawyer in Idaho he was closely identified with big mine, timber and cattle interests.		
Voted, alone except for one other Senator, against increasing the low wage of postal workers.	1912	Put through bill to establish the eight hour day on government contracts. Favors eight hour day in mines.
Opposes the child labor amendment.	1912	Put through bill to establish the Children's Bureau (though with no power to prohibit child labor). "Lashed out against manufacturers employing child labor."
NEGRO		
In his first important speech in the Senate he justified Teddy Roosevelt's unconstitutional dismissal of Negro troops without trial after race riots in Texas.		Once saved a Negro from lynching through the force of his personality.
During a debate on suffrage he said it was a mistake to give Negroes the vote after the Civil War, and favored repeal of the 15th Amendment. (This speech "thrilled the South", reports biographer)		
Tells Mississippi Senator: "I am not discussing whether the South could submit to the domination of the inferior race, or the justification of what you have done (i.e. evasion of the 15th Amendment). We would do the same thing in the North if the situation were the same."		
Opposes Wagner-Costigan anti-lynch bill.		
TRUSTS		
Failed to support Teddy Roosevelt in his trust-busting campaign.	1936	Introduced a mild bill directed against trusts. Orates against monopoly.
SUFFRAGE		
But voted against suffrage amendment.	1910	Introduced suffrage amendment.
But changed his mind for the third time and again voted "nay".	1918	Publicly promised suffragettes his support.

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h's Ledger

LARD

	DEBIT		CREDIT
	SECURITY		
1921	Warned against "drugging and debauching citizens with subsidies and bonuses", warned soldiers against exchanging "a noble heritage for less than a mess of pottage".	1936	Showed sympathy for aims of Townsend.
1934	Voted for inflationary Patman bonus bill		
	SUPREME COURT		
1936	Declared power of Supreme Court must be preserved.	1923	Proposed bill to curb Supreme Court.
	IMPERIALISM AND WAR		
1912	Defended Teddy Roosevelt's imperialism in Panama.	1930	Opposed "keeping military heel on helpless people" in Haiti.
1918	Opposed withdrawing Marines from Nicaragua.	1914, 1922, 1925	Opposed intervention in Nicaragua.
1915	Urged intervention in Mexico on basis of Monroe Doctrine to protect Catholics and Americans. "My Bible and my religion teach me that there may be times when it is the duty of Christians to fight."	1927	Opposed intervention in Mexico and use of Monroe Doctrine as cloak for imperialism.
1916	Approved Wilson's expedition against Villa.		
1935	Introduced Knights of Columbus resolution for Congressional intervention in Mexican religious situation.		
1917	Voted for war.	1921	Helped force Harding to call disarmament conference
1924	Voted for Japanese exclusion bill opposes League of Nations and sanctions.		
1935	Helped Hearst and Coughlin in their successful fight against the World Court.	1920-1933	Worked for the recognition of the Soviet Union.
1936	Opposed recent neutrality bill.		
	OTHER ISSUES		
1907	Indicted by Federal Grand Jury for timber frauds. Acquitted.	1910	Helped put through income tax
1928	Campaigned for Hoover; usually threatens to bolt party before convention but is always found on the stump for whatever reactionary candidate the Republicans produce.	1913	Steered through 17th Amendment for direct election of Senators.
		1920	Helped secure release of political prisoners after war.
1936	Is backed in his campaign by Ham Fish		

nformation the most , for in- uding The and the every day, that a bal- s a thing rable. The think it is is one Re- t seems to enough at- important s Senator o idol. He President, ll he get eat Budge- unless he udget too? led to do about this, t balancing him. We success be- h is a lib- ns there is g to say on as every- eral is one both direc- or anyway

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Social Credit: 2+2=5

WILL BLAKE

To the New Masses:

Hoping for a little mild excitement amidst the antiquated economics of your pages, I bought your issue of March 17, when I saw the Hearst-like title on your cover, "Ezra Pound, Silver Shirt." I read the letters with high expectations of dirt. But, gentlemen, you fooled me out of a little pocket change. Did Ezra, who wastes a lot of time writing to Communist journals, Communist organizations, and Silver Shirts, about advanced ideas on credit, join the Silver Shirts? He did not. Did he embrace their program? His letter shows he tried to get them to change it, including their anti-Jew prejudice. A fatuous attempt, for the final issue of Liberation denounced Ezra's own program of Social Credit as "a Jewish plot."

Perhaps you remember in November, 1934, I asked you several questions raised by the "Naziating gas" tactics of one Joseph M. Gillman when reviewing Social Credit in your columns. The first of these was, "As avowed partisans in what you conceive to be a class war, do you place expediency in propaganda above truth?" And you didn't reply. You don't need to, after the caption over the Pound letter. But I should imagine you would experience some inner discomfort as you line up with Wall Street in the attempt to besmirch Social Credit.

Gorham Munson.

ALL SOCIAL history up to now has been explained in terms of material power. It was obvious that the control of land by a small class buttressed the feudal state, that the control of precious metals and colonial resources built up European capitalism as did the ownership of slaves in the new-found colonies. The expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil formed a large landless population forced to sell their hapless hides to the owners of machines, factories, etc. From Roman times sailors have worked for shipowners, peasants for landlords, artisans for masters, workers for capitalists. We are told, however, by the social credit advocates, that such economics is now antiquated. Whatever may have been the previous history of mankind, the explanation of economic maladjustment today is found in "costing." According to all schools of social credit, purchasing power is not released as fast as production warrants. The reason, they say, is simple; price includes the payment of wages, salaries and profits to the immediate producers, plus a second group of payments for raw materials, bank payments and other external costs. Unless the consumer is provided with purchasing-power media to absorb the second group of payments there is a permanent crisis. Provide him with such media and all social injustice vanishes. Credit by being made universal and public, equates consumption and production and smashes the monopoly of credit now held by finance capital. This, in sum and substance, is the social credit hypothesis.

The contradiction between the Marxist viewpoint and the social credit viewpoint is theoretically complete. We hold that capital is a relation of exploitation and nothing else. It can only exist where the capitalist class owns the physical means of production and where, therefore, the class that has only its labor-power to sell must accept such wages as enable it to reproduce itself biologically, at the general historic level prevailing in that society. We hold that this tendency is only modified by class struggle and that only in so far as labor can bring material pressure to bear on the capitalists is it possible to mitigate exploitation.

According to the social credit theorists the entire problem is in the sphere of circulation. But the history of mankind is inexplicable on such a hypothesis. Why does the capitalist class retain armies, navies, the militia, police, immense juridical and social power, taxation, social violence, if not for the protection of material power and material goods? If the social conflicts are really to be regulated by a costing mechanism, or by the issuance of paper, whatever its theoretical shape, why this long, bloody, bitter, secular conflict? If the class struggle be a fallacy of antiquated economics, how has mankind so involved itself in diabolical conflicts which an appropriate bookkeeping might almost immediately annul? Something more: if the difficulty does not lie in exploitation at the point of production then we must assume, ideally, the social credit hypothesis on the basis of a

From the American Artists Congress: Against War and Fascism — *Mendez*

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given production. According to this theory the consumers would be able to buy more goods, the rich would retain their property, profits would not be disturbed, yet all this could occur with no addition to total productivity. Two plus two equals five. Now, either the social credit group holds that all the claims on property such as bonds, shares, etc., depend upon profit, that is, upon sums withheld by some from others (in which case social credit would annihilate them), or it must hold that profits arise in the sphere of production, in which case the costing explanation is not the explanation at all, but robbery in the sphere of production is; on either horn of the dilemma they are impaled.

It is not necessary to elaborate the analysis here. John Strachey's pamphlet on "Social Credit" augmented from his chapter in *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis* cites the more obvious objections, as Maurice Dobb did brilliantly in The British Labor Monthly (September, 1933) and John Porter in The Communist International (February, 1936). Nearly all criticism centers on the perception that the Douglas social-credit theorists suffer from the "fallacy of composition," which is that the payments made by the producer over and above salaries, wages and dividends are themselves such payments at an earlier stage of production. They also concentrate on the familiar objection that consumers' goods are only one-tenth of all goods sold. They further refute the Douglasite refuge that the time-relation between previous production and present consumption may be significant.

The social crediteers are all things to all men. In his letter to the Silver Shirts, Ezra Pound points out that the surplus of prices is a link in the financiers' chain "onto bonds." On the other hand Aberhart, premier of Alberta, states in his *Social Credit Manual* that it is not the intention of social credit to confiscate or take away anything from those that have it. One is forcibly reminded of Feder threatening to break the power of monopoly capital in Germany and Hitler receiving Thyssen's contributions at the same time. They cannot have it both ways.[1]

It is regrettable but true that social credit reveals all the classic features of Hitlerism. It is looked at kindly by Mosley in England. It is akin to the ideas of the more radical of the Nazis in their campaigns against the money power, now happily enshrined in the person of Dr. Schacht. Ezra Pound expresses joyous approval of Mussolini though Mr. Gorham Munson is disturbed at the strange suspicion we may have, that a gentleman who writes to the Silver Shirts and approves of fascism in Italy might not find fascism too delicate for his stomach in North Carolina. Mr. Munson is also annoyed at the idea that Mr. Pound is anti-Jewish. It appears that he vindicated Jews against the strictures of the Silver Shirts. Regrettably, Major Douglas is not of the same opinion. He not only attacks "Semitism," as he calls it, but declares that the opponents of collectivism must put the *Jews on trial as a group* and not as individuals and that it is necessary to destroy the group activity. The Jews may thank God that they have at last found an enemy to destroy them with the circulating paper of social credit and not with the flames of Torquemada or the hatchets of Kischinev. Mr. Pound is supposed to be discussing economics: why then the use of the word "Jew" at all? Either social credit is right or wrong, since the sphere of circulation would operate equally whether economy were handled by Chinese, Malays, Armenians or Anglo-Saxons. Why does he use the expression "international Jew and local Aryan," why Aryan at all, since the term is wholly unscientific? Why does he refer to plots, manipulated by Jews "AND others." The Jewish people number only three percent of the European races. Why then this remarkably high post of dishonor? This is repeated frequently in Pound's letter. Finally he lets the cat out of the bag. He refers to the London School of Economics faculty as "largely middle-European Jew and thoroughly wrong."

As to Wall Street being joined by THE NEW MASSES in besmirching social credit, this is really too much. Here you have the believers in Marxist philosophy aiming at a 100-percent expropriation of the rich by the proletariat, thereby socializing all material possessions used in production and incidentally annihilating all credit phenomena in private control. Since social credit, on its own hypothesis, seeks only to disturb their

"Young man, you'd be interested in knowing that our women's club just abolished capitalism."

[1] The Social Credit Party swept Alberta. It has not delivered the goods at all. Hence the prophet Douglas cries out that he has been betrayed by his disciple, Judas Aberhart. He therefore declines to lead his people into the promised land. They must wait until he gets a pure disciple. Douglas pleads the alibi of orthodoxy, Aberhart the alibi of circumstance. Imagine Lenin, after the horror of civil war and famine in 1921, developing a purity of doctrine fugue from reality!

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credit control it seems rather surprising to find common ground between the sworn foes in totality of capitalism and their prospective quarry, as against those who would deprive them at the worst of only a section of their possessions. In point of fact they would deprive them of nothing at all and their demagogy will come in as handy to capitalism *when it shall have sufficiently decayed,* as it has in Germany. Naturally capitalism will laugh at the social credit group so long as it is capable of establishing reserves in older historic terms.

One understands fully the disdain Mr. Munson entertains for our "ignorance" of the minutiae of the tenets of his sect. Marx wrote that in every crisis the bourgeoisie seeks a paper escape from its quandaries but always beats its head against a wall of gold. Previous to the World War the favorite nostrums were bimetalism, fiat money, or the issuance of greenbacks against government bonds. The disastrous post-war experiences of the European states have changed the fashion in currency cranks. They no longer seek a downright inflation leading to an unchecked increase of prices but rather a stability of prices and an augmentation of buying power. It is the same old solution of a material contradiction by means of paper. The true reason for the popularity of social credit, however, lies in what it has in common with the Townsend Plan, the promise of a national dividend or universal handout and not in its analytical theories. What is more ugly is shown by the Douglas scheme for Scotland, wherein he asks for a reduction in wages of 25 percent and the forfeiture of the national dividend by trades unions not honoring wages agreements. He also wishes labor to accept designated employment or forfeit the national dividend. Furthermore, he regards trade-unionism generally as a form of social pressure interfering with the proper functioning of distribution as established by social credit.

We therefore see every mask used by intense reactionaries. There is the corporate state, there is the attack on finance capitalism to the exclusion of industrial capitalism, there is race prejudice and there is a consistent ambiguity on the question of the position of profits and capitalist supremacy. It can be stated as an historic axiom that any group that seeks to divert attention from the material power of the capitalist class to that segment of their power dependent on finance operations (abstracted from the interplay of these monopolies) is almost invariably anti-semitic and nationalistic. That is, it serves as a shield for the Fords, Rockefellers, Mellons and even Morgans and other "international Gentiles" by assuming the true oppression of labor to rest in the counting-houses of only Jewish arbitrageurs, exchange-dealers, note-brokers and private investment bankers. This despite the fact that neither the great banks of America nor the Big Five of Great Britain have any serious Jewish influence. It is always needful to take the mind of the peasant from the landowner, the worker from the boss, so as to divert the class struggle from reality into a cryptic world. In the Middle Ages it was religion, today it is the "monetary mechanism." The symbol of this mysticism is always a weak racial minority, whether Jew in Europe, Greek in Ottoman Turkey, Chinese in Java, Parsee in India.

The appeal of social credit to the middle classes lies in its putting the source of their weakness, not in their lack of real capital goods or in their poor bargaining power, but rather in an intellectual concept concerning costing, which vindicates the mind without calling into play the brutal realities of historic power. It tries to seduce the farmers by its promise of a basic dividend and an immediate alleviation of their price difficulties as sellers of unwanted crops. It sweeps like a comet through the heavens of crisis, like all previous inflation luminaries, but this time, it comes not with the liberal light of populism, but concealing from its generous dupes the surrounding darkness of reaction.

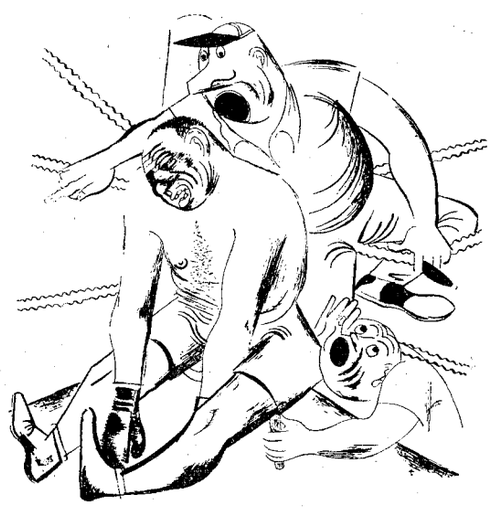
They Think They Win

ROBERT FORSYTHE

THE matter isn't worth writing about but I always have a queer feeling when I read of the promotion of boxing in the Soviet Union. Most obviously my reaction is a reflex conditioned by the business of prize fighting here, which is a sad affair. When I think of boxing, it is not of two young men pummeling each other out of delight in physical conflict but of Madison Square Garden on fight night, with Jamaica Kid standing blind in the lobby, hoping that the crowd will fill his tin cup. It happens that I saw Jamaica Kid fight in his good days. He was never a topnotcher and in those times a colored boy had to be willing to be "handled," but he was a competent scrapper who gave a manager a good living and finally took one too many jabs in the eye.

The Negroes have always had a bad time in prize fighting after their fighting days were over. It was possible for years to see Young Griffo, perhaps the cleverest man who ever lived, lying in doorways along West Forty-second Street, a little fat hulking wreck living on the dimes of the curious. Sam Langford fought his last bouts when half blind, finding his opponents by touch and annihilating them as of old when he could get close to them. The great Joe Gans fought Bat Nelson when he was half dead of tuberculosis, succumbing to the disease shortly after.

But the fate of the white boxers has been little better. Nelson is still alive and practically dotty, a punch-drunk wreck. Ad Wolgast is insane. Johnny Dundee is still around



Gus Peck

training in gymnasiums for the comeback which can never come. On fight nights at the Garden you can see the old scrappers, old at twenty-five and thirty, with their battered faces, their slightly teetering walk ("walking on their heels") and the blank, dogged look in their faces of men who have received too much hammering about the head. What they are trying to do generally is talk their way into the fights or to make a touch from somebody who may still remember them from their days of glory.

The Garden lobby is also filled with a different breed of men, who seem more content with life. These are the managers, the gamblers, the slick crowd who are always close to easy money. By some error the reporters never explain when speaking of the purses of a Joe Louis or a Bat Batalino that if a fighter gets half the money he earns he is lucky. Any good manager takes half of the purse, after first taking out all expenses of training and promotion. It is the rare fighter who is able to meet a manager on even financial ground. His time is taken with training and fighting. His manager handles the business and obviously doesn't cheat himself. As a consequence many big money-makers as fighters end up broke.

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It is always possible to speak too seriously of a dirty profession and in the long run it probably matters very little whether a few horny-handed maulers end up in the nut house, but considering it from another angle the prize-fight racket is almost a perfect miniature of capitalistic civilization. It is exploitation on the crudest and simplest scale. Where you see it at its best is in the office of Jimmy Johnston, the matchmaker at Madison Square Garden. Nobody can really say he has experienced American life until he has taken part in this performance. Because it is so obviously a crooked business, the participants make no hypocritical protestations of honesty, such as you will find in Wall Street and in the United States Chamber of Commerce. The charm of the old political crooks was of the same kind. When they told you they were going to steal the gold out of your teeth, they stole it. They said nothing about defending the Supreme Court, upholding the dignity of the House or maintaining the dignity of the courts. They recognized that politics and Big Business were tied hand in hand, both crooked to the limit, but they allowed the rights of sanctity to go by default to Big Business.

The cagy gentry who gather each afternoon in Jimmy Johnston's office are almost too good to be true. They know that everybody there is out to rook everybody else. In

Gus Peck

the days of Prohibition, prize fighting was an integral part of gangsterism, with the big shots muscling in on every promising fighter. It was impossible to get a bout in New York unless it was fixed with the "right people." The racket is still in the hands of gamblers and thugs, with often in the background a respectable pew-holder who has no objection to the profits on busted noses. So every afternoon you find the managers and sports writers in Johnston's office, talking a language which is not so interesting for its originality (despite all romantic tales to the contrary), but amazing for what it reveals. From long years of contact, they know what to discount and what to believe, and as a consequence have almost established a new language of their own. Everybody knows that everybody else is a crook and operates upon that premise. They know that when a man promises to do something on a certain Wednesday, he has no intention of doing anything at all. They know that Jones, speaking of $5,000, means $2,750; they know that when Smith says no he means yes. They know that everybody will double-cross everybody else and get great satisfaction out of it. The fighters themselves are a detail. If a manager is broke, he will take a bout for his man with anybody. If he comes through, all right; if he is overmatched and ruined by a stronger opponent, he is just another pug on the down trail. The gymnasiums are full of kids anxious for fame and willing to overlook the old hulks who wander around trying to bum a dime on the strength of their past fame.

In short, a very odoriferous profession. The manly art of self-defense—defense for parasites who batten upon the fighters and always fail to see Jamaica Kid's tincup in the Garden lobby on fight night. It was the profession which built Madison Square Garden for the Hundred Millionaires and which allows the official Mrs. William Randolph Hearst the satisfaction of being a philanthropist. The Milk Fund Fights, promoted by the New York American under the auspices of Mrs. Hearst, are something for a Grand Jury investigation. The greater part of the milking comes before the final split-up of profits is made. If the babies loved so dearly by Mrs. Hearst and the circulation department of The New York American get as much as $15,000 out of a total gross of $1,000,000, they are lucky children. By the same token, if the sports gentlemen of The American get as little out of the thing as the babies, they would be subject to expulsion from the lodge for thwarting the constitution and by-laws.

Whatever may be the high moral character of Joe Louis' managers, they happen to be as well the czars of the numbers racket, the most pernicious gambling scheme ever hoisted upon this country and one which

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particularly impoverishes the Negro population. Since Prohibition it is the great source of boodle for the old gunmen (as witness the activities of the late Dutch Schultz) and it would be well for all admirers of Joe Louis to keep the fact in mind in case of future disappointments.

The chances of the czar of the numbers racket ever getting control of the leading Soviet boxer is remote, but I should like to warn my friends in Russia to be everlastingly vigilant. It may be necessary for a Soviet boxer to have his seconds and trainers and rubbers, but if a man ever sits in his corner and assumes the airs of possession and says: "Go in there and sock with him, kid; he can't hurt us," I hope he will be taken out and shot so completely full of holes he could pass as a complimentary ticket for any boxing show in the capitalistic world.

The Law

The books stand big upon his desk
telling him what to tell to men,
all the questions money can put
and truth or final things not there,

His voice is deep with pocket sound
his collar starched and briefcase full,
he steers his feet and sacred ground,
the Law is good—and so is pull.

I say the judge's bench is wood
and truth or final things not there.
the court spittoons are filled with blood,
the windows with Vanzetti's stare.

ARTHUR SCHUTZER.

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Our Readers' Forum

More on Macfadden

It is time to let up a little on William R. Hearst and direct some of our fire toward another quarter. I refer to another publisher, that glorifier of the muscle-bound physique, Bernarr Macfadden, whose editorial in the May 16 issue of his Liberty definitely brands him as our leading saber rattler and deliberate fact distorter.

Blatant Bernarr smears two pages of his publication with the wildest, unqualified and inflammatory statements. He has been in California recently, he writes. There he learned, from an unnamed source, that there are 250,000 armed Japanese reservists in the state, waiting the word to spring upon the defenseless natives. He calls upon the government to build a vast air fleet for protecting the Pacific coastline against a Japanese invasion. A military force of 500,000 men is recommended to guard against this attack.

There is an air of finality in Macfadden's statements regarding the Yellow Peril but he neglects to offer the slightest vestige of proof. He berates the "fools" who have brought about a reduction of munitions production and screams that these same "fools" shall be forced to take their places in the front line to repel the inevitable attack. . . .

Ordinarily Blatant Bernarr's editorial ravings are either ignored or passed off with a derisive chuckle. But in this effort, it would seem, he has gone too far.

This is something which cannot be laughed off. Such a deliberate and unqualified attack upon a friendly nation from the editorial pen of an American publisher is worthy of the condemnation of every sane-minded citizen. (Incidentally, Liberty is carrying a serial entitled "Without Warning" in which, as the title implies, Japan is depicted as making an unheralded and unprovoked attack upon the United States.) If Mr. Macfadden is using his editorial page as a medium of publicity for this serial it would appear that he has overstepped the limits of legitimate publicity. The serial contains nothing but militaristic propaganda, unmitigated bunk.

HAL EVANS.

Topeka, Kansas.

Hearst-Macfadden Tie-up

Your article on Bernarr Macfadden interested me particularly, but I was surprised to note that it made no mention whatever of the Macfadden financial tie-up with Hearst. This is considered common knowledge in many circles. It seems to me that a long article such as Stuart's should have said something about this matter. ROGER WILKINSON.

While I have all along suspected the tie-up that Mr. Wilkinson refers to, I was unable to find any conclusive evidence: A day or so after my article appeared in THE NEW MASSES I found it in Lundberg's remarkable history of Hearst. Hearst very decidedly and indisputably has a considerable financial interest in Macfadden's publications. Birds of a feather, etc.

JOHN STUART.

"The Police Attacked Us"

I am writing this letter in the hope that THE NEW MASSES will publicize one true fact concerning the May 11 attack on the seamen by the police of the City of New York.

As a seaman, having read the press accounts, I wish to bring this fact to light, that is, the final attack made by the police on the pickets. When the Emergency Squad arrived, they did not stop to view the situation but proceeded to discharge tear gas and to use as violent a method as has ever been used to disperse a peaceful picket in the City of New York.

The Committee of Citizens, which was formed in the City of New York to aid the striking seamen, has done wonderful work in supplying food and clothing for the seamen. They have also planned a benefit theatrical performance to be held at the Majestic Theater, 44th Street, West of Broadway, on Sunday night, June 7, at 8:00 p. m. The proceeds of this performance will go toward aiding the striking seamen in their demands on government and shipowners alike for adequate safety measures for passengers and crew.

New York City. JOSEPH BYRON.

U. of P. Rejects N. M.

Thank you for your recent note informing us that someone has presented a year's subscription to THE NEW MASSES in the name of this library. [University of Pennsylvania.]

Our building is very badly overcrowded, and the space available for current numbers of periodicals is particularly inadequate. On this account we are under the necessity of restricting very closely the number of periodicals kept on file, and the necessity of declining many gift subscriptions which are offered. For these reasons I would suggest that if it is possible for you to transfer the gift subscription to some other library it will be advantageous to all concerned. C. SEYMOUR THOMPSON.

—But Accepts Time

Thank you for sending me a copy of the note which you received from the University of Pennsylvania librarian in answer to my gift of a NEW MASSES subscription. I wish you would publish the University's answer in your columns, since I think your readers would be interested in learning the status of economic freedom at Franklin's University.

I am an alumna of the University, and I know that when it was a question of getting a subscription for Time magazine not long ago, there was no issue about space, but only one about not being able to afford the money for the subscription. As soon as some one volunteered to put up the money for the subscription for Time, the University gladly accepted.

I am sending a copy of the University's letter to The Philadelphia Record and The Pennsylvanian.

I also think it is an interesting commentary on our present set-up that you are able to send THE NEW MASSES to a political prisoner but not to a University undergraduate.

JEAN ROISMAN.

"Blast and Farewell"

Recently The Washington (D. C.) Post had occasion to pat itself on the back because its editor, Felix Morley, received a Pulitzer Award. The same was true for the local Scripps-Howard paper, The Washington News. However, the situation behind the scenes was far from laudatory.

Karl Schriftgiesser, a staff writer and columnist of The Washington Post, had written a review of Lundberg's *Imperial Hearst*. Perhaps without any intention of predicting the future, Schriftgiesser entitled his review "Blast and Farewell." The best available information places Schriftgiesser on a farm in the New England hinterland, no longer a member of The Washington Post staff. All of the rumors agree that he was called on the mat because of his caustic review. Obviously, Schriftgiesser was told to pull his literary punches and spend his time writing about the cherry blossoms around the Tidal Basin or how charming and cool the streets of the Capital are with the new leaves out. Rather than submit to censorship of his columns and reviews . . . Schriftgiesser resigned. Washington has lost one of its most capable and valiant fighters against war and fascism. . . . The free artist and writer can only find refuge on the Left.

Washington, D. C. A COLLEAGUE.

Wanted: A Writers' Bureau

Schneider's illuminating article, "Mass Writers Wanted," ought to serve middle-class and embryonic writers as a primer in the first prerequisite of revolutionary writing, namely, the task of becoming an integrated personality.

There is one thing, however, which he does not indicate. I refer to the interest of accepted proletarian writers which does not manifest itself in the nature of an encouraging attitude toward those who stand with definite contributions at the barred doors of the literary revolutionary movement. During the past few months, I have noticed through personal experience, how some proletarian writers, who have carved for themselves a niche in the American literary scene, react with inartistic indifference to literary aspirants who do have mass-appeal contributions to make. Some people have argued against my assertions that an honest proletarian artist is free from the residues of bourgeois attitudes.

How much of this is true or not is beside the point. What I am interested in primarily is the necessity of establishing some such thing as a guidance bureau to which writers can come for helpful advice and understanding. Revolutionary Marxism is not only a *Weltanschauung*. It is more than that. It is a practical activity which does not exclude ethical duty from the wide field of literary endeavor.

The unknown proletarian writer should not be compelled to seek the advice of or appeal to the generosity of bourgeois critics and authors. He should be given every opportunity even if he be legion, by those who constitute the front ranks of the revolutionary movement. The history of the Soviet Union's achievement has demonstrated how vitally important the pen is to the hammer and the sickle.

You speak of pamphlet publication, and a publishing house soon to be launched as every writer's opportunity. To inform a stranger that Yonkers is north of Manhattan is not enough. How to get there without wasteful rambling and blundering: that is the point.

BERTRAND E. POLLANS.

"33 Out of 67"

I have read Isidor Schneider's articles on writing and writers with great interest—splendid articles! And in the present issue of the magazine, I notice what Dee Brown has to say.

It might interest Miss Brown to know that of the sixty-seven stories published in Manuscript during 1935, thirty-three were by new writers who made their first appearance in our pages. She refers, of course, to the left-wing magazines—but there are all degrees of Left among magazines these days, and though our magazine is not known as "radical," yet the majority of the stories in our pages are far Left of the "middle-ground," and many of them are as radical as can be found in any other publication today.

What we mean to say *is*: we welcome new left-wing writers with open arms! Why not shoot a few of those stories our way?

Incidentally, NEW MASSES is the most "alive" magazine that comes to me. JOHN ROOD.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

A. E. Housman: An Appreciation

A. E. HOUSMAN died May first. He was seventy-seven, a professor of Latin at Cambridge, one of the last Victorians, a fine poet.

Beyond an occasional comment in the decent tradition of liberal England—e.g., "Murder is murder no longer if perpetrated by white men on black," there is nothing in the record of his life or work to show that he was concerned with the class struggle: he made his private revolution and effected a separate peace with his own time. Moreover, there is little reason to believe that a classless society would or could have made a very different use of him. The kind of fighting there was in his own heart required his assignment, on the cultural front, to some difficult and special duty; he could assume, in the preservation of the culture of the past, obligations beyond the capacity of less qualified men. And in the creation of culture his function would have been, under any system, quietist: that beautiful poise and balance, that perfect serenity in tension, serve to fix and to suspend, rather than to urge or promulgate, things that are valuable. Housman's poetry conveys a pleasure of rest, not a pleasure of motion.

If it is possible, in reading this poetry, to perform an act of escape, to jump the life to come, and discover in *A Shropshire Lad* the existence of a post-revolutionary man who has no hunger save that of the heart, nevertheless an indifferent neglect or a sectarian dismissal of Housman is a greater peril. From his art and conduct we can derive more than inspiration for academic homage, we can take practical and profitable instruction.

To begin with, there is the less familiar aspect of Housman's existence, the way in which he made a living. He was a Latin teacher: he edited the works of Lucan, Juvenal and Manilius, and contributed frequent articles to classical periodicals. Housman devoted to an interpretation of the classics a literally terrific vitality. He scorned no detail of the exhaustive and fatiguing labors of routine, and he spared no scorn for the ineptitudes of his inferiors. Marx argued that criticism should be ruthless; and in the application of this canon to classical criticism, Housman can truly be called Marxian. "The task of editing the classics," he wrote, "is continuously attempted by scholars who have neither enough intellect nor enough literature." Likewise, "Why should a classical scholar care what he says, so long as everyone knows that his heart is in the right place? In no single line of human activity except our own—not in politics, not in religion, not in the advertisement of patent medicines—would a man venture to stand forward and utter words so evidently irreconcilable with reason, with reality, and with his own behavior." Of a particular scholar, he remarked, "Mr. M's readiness to explain is considerably greater than his faculty for explaining," and of the tendencies of an entire school of criticism, he observed, "The unintelligent forfeit their claim to compassion when they begin to indulge in self-complacent airs, and to call themselves sane critics, meaning that they are mechanics." This gall and acid with which he rebuked, in the field of scholarship, the same ethical laxity and shoddiness that were pervading the areas of commerce and art, this unprofessional interference with the camaraderie of log-rolling cliques and coteries did not endear him to his contemporaries. There are signs, in the last book he edited, that their attitude was getting under his skin, and that he was beginning to feel badly treated, but on the whole he maintained himself with austere integrity. "If applause were what I wanted, applause I would have; for I know the way, and it is easy."

While we are mentioning Housman's prose, we might call attention to his homely little essay, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, interesting not so much for what it says, but for what Housman feels he might have said about a technical aspect of their craft in which revolutionary poets need to become far more competent, that is to say, the art of prosody.

> The artifice of versification . . . has underlying it a set of facts which are unknown to most of those who practise it; and their success, when they succeed, is owing to instinctive tact and a natural goodness of ear. This latent base, comprising natural laws by which all versification is conditioned, and the secret springs of the pleasure which good versification can give, is little explored by critics: a few pages of Coventry Patmore and a few of Frederic Myers contain all, so far as I know, or all of value, which has been written on such matters; and to these pages I could add a few more. I mean such matters as these: the existence in some metres, not in others, of an inherent alternation of stresses, stronger and weaker; the presence in verse of silent and invisible feet, like rests in music; the reason why some lines of different length will combine harmoniously while others can only be so combined by great skill or good luck; why, while blank verse can be written in lines of ten or six syllables, a series of octosyllables ceases to be verse if they are not rhymed; . . . the necessary limit to inversion of stress, which Milton understood and Bridges overstepped; why, of two pairs of rhymes, equally correct and both consisting of the same vowels and consonants, one is richer to the mental ear and the other poorer; the office of alliteration in verse, and how its definition must be narrowed if it is to be something which can perform that office and not fail of its effect or actually defeat its purpose.

Something of these matters can be learned from a resolute study of Housman's own verse; meanwhile we may hope that a full and explicit treatment of them will be found among his papers and given publication.

The simplicity of Housman's poetry compels more than casual admiration. This is not the artless address of an untutored mind, but highly studied and sophisticated utterance. The pure simplicity of expression derives from a subtle complexity of experience; erudition, transcending itself, is put to its noblest use. Such a poem as "March," with such lines as these

> The boys are up the woods with day
> To fetch the daffodils away,
> And home at noonday from the hills
> They bring no dearth of daffodils.

could hardly have been written by a poet who was not steeped in the atmosphere of Latin verse, keenly susceptible to its interplay of balance and antithesis, yet with what energy, what devotion, what fidelity, the pilgrim to Rome and London remembers Shropshire. There is neither the snobbishness of ostentation, nor the snobbishness of condescension.

> And friends abroad must bear in mind
> Friends they leave at home behind.

Well: if that can be done for the peasant and yeoman, it can be done for the worker;

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What About SHOSTAKOVICH?

See page 29

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if it can be done by Victorians, it should be done by ourselves.

And if my foot returns no more
To Teme nor Corve nor Severn shore,
Luck, my lads, be with you still
By falling stream and standing hill,
By chiming tower and whispering tree,
Men that made a man of me
About your work in town and farm
Still you'll keep my head from harm,
Still you'll help me, hands that gave
A grasp to friend me to the grave.

Housman has been tremendously popular, and his popularity is encouraging, for it shows how, in spite of the steady endeavor by interested parties to degrade and debauch the public taste, there is in the human spirit something that responds to fineness and resists corruption.

Nor is it possible for the careful reader to miss the implicit revolutionary values of Housman's poetry, and he will often be rewarded by the discovery of explicit address that he cannot afford to neglect.

Here in London streets I ken
No such helpmates, only men;
And these are not in plight to bear,
If they would, another's care.
They have enough as 'tis: I see
In many an eye that measures me
The mortal sickness of a mind
Too unhappy to be kind.
Undone with misery, all they can
Is to hate their fellow man;
And till they drop they needs must still
Look at you and wish you ill.

Finally, let us consider a poem emphasized by Housman both with a title and by its position as the first of the *Last Poems*. The poem is called "The West," and the symbol indicates that regressive primitive yearning for the evening-land which vitiates so much activity of the human mind. The message of the poem is both timely and timeless:

Comrade, look not on the west:
'Twill have the heart out of your breast;
'Twill take your thoughts and sink them far,
Leagues beyond the sunset bar.

Oh lad, I fear that yon's the sea
Where they fished for you and me,
And there, from whence we both were ta'en,
You and I shall drown again.

Send not on your soul before
To dive from that beguiling shore,
And let not yet the swimmer leave
His clothes upon the sands of eve.

Too fast to yonder strand forlorn
We journey, to the sunken bourn,
To flush the fading tinges eyed
By other lads at eventide.

Wide is the world, to rest or roam,
And early 'tis for turning home:
Plant your heel on earth and stand,
And let's forget our native land.

When you and I are split on air
Long we shall be strangers there;
Friends of flesh and bone are best:
Comrade, look not on the west.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES.

Banana Power

THE BANANA EMPIRE, by Charles David Kepner and Jay Henry Soothill. Vanguard. $2.

THE history of "banana power" goes back, roughly, to 1870 when Captain Lorenzo Baker sailed into Boston harbor with a few bunches of this strange, tropical fruit, the gift of a Jamaica planter. Finding a ready market for the new product, the shrewd New Englander set out to develop the banana trade. Fifteen years later, Captain Baker and nine others formed the Boston Fruit Company with a capital of $20,000. When the company was incorporated, after a mere five years in business, it was worth well over a half-million.

Meanwhile, during these same years, Minor C. Keith, who had come to Costa Rica to build railroads, was experimenting with banana cultivations in order to provide freight for his railroad. In this he was so successful that railroads in Costa Rica and elsewhere in Central America soon became a by-product of the luscious yellow fruit. In 1899, the Keith interests and the Boston Fruit Company joined forces, forming the United Fruit Company with a capital stock of some eleven million dollars.

The twentieth century saw the United Fruit Company develop into a gigantic fruit trust. Today its assets are valued at 250 million dollars. It controls, without serious competition, the production, transportation, marketing and price of bananas in most of the western hemisphere. It owns vast tracts of land extending from Mexico into Columbia and reaching out into the Caribbean Islands. With its railroads, steamship, docks, warehouses, telephone and telegraph lines, radio stations, commissary stores and other resources, it dominates the economic and political life of Central America.

Such, in brief, is the origin and extent of the "banana empire." The intricate and often obscene details of the story, Messrs. Kepner and Soothill have for the first time gathered into a comprehensive and authoritative study. The general nature and function of economic imperialism in this age of monopoly capitalism is now well understood, thanks to the Marxist-Leninist analysis; but it is important, especially from the practical point of view, that we have "case histories" of specific enterprises, studies that supply us with concrete facts. Hence the significance and the value of this book and the series.

In an introduction to *The Banana Empire,* Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes unfortunately tends to obscure fundamental issues which the problem of imperialism raises; and Messrs. Kepner and Soothill themselves fail to draw certain necessary conclusions from their own study. Nevertheless, the latter is solid and sound enough to permit us to evaluate the historic role of banana imperialism. Considering the phenomenon from the point of view of its total effects, it is scarcely worth mentioning that in the process of crushing its rivals and ruthlessly extending its empire, the United Fruit Company has managed to make the banana a common element of our diet and to develop an efficient technique for the mass production and the rapid distribution of this fruit. Of far greater consequence is the fact that by this process, it has reduced the countries in which it operates to semi-servitude, to the most degrading standards of living, to the most primitive cultural levels.

When Carleton Beals described Puerto Barrios as "the only place I know where people stick water-closets in their front yards," he epitomized the "civilizing" effects of the United Fruit Company's activities in Central America. Setting up petty despots almost at will, inciting criminal border disputes, mercilessly crushing popular discontent, this giant corporation has destroyed small native farmers, ruined merchants, paid incredibly low wages to its workers, disrupted normal agriculture, gutted thousands of acres that may never again be fit for any kind of crop and prevented the development of local industry—all the while amassing fabulous profits and contributing practically nothing to the public revenue.

Nowhere in the United States has capitalist exploitation been so "efficient." Yet we are by no means exempt from "banana rule." Not only do we pay the United Fruit Company relatively high prices for its product, but through the Post Office Department's subsidies to the "Great White Fleet," through the budgets of the State and Navy Departments, which maintain elaborate services for the benefit of the United, and in various other ways we are taxed by the banana barons.

In a short chapter on "Labor Throws down the Gauntlet," to be developed more fully in a forthcoming book by Mr. Kepner, the authors correctly estimate that "the group in Latin America most likely to offer effective resistance to 'banana power' is organized labor." The need for resistance, as we have seen, is a common one for banana workers and banana consumers. It is even more clearly so when we consider that the United Fruit Company, powerful as it is in itself, is closely related to the First National Bank of Boston and through that institution is indirectly, at least, a part of the all-devouring Morgan octopus. Thus, in the last analysis, "banana power" means fascism for us unless we join the desperate masses of Central and Caribbean America to exterminate it.

CHARLES WEDGER.

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A Time to Praise

A TIME TO DANCE, by C. Day Lewis. Random House. $1.75.

I AM enthusiastic about C. Day Lewis's poetry.

While I was reading his new book I lost consciousness of being a professional reader, lost it in the sheer enjoyment of the poetry. It was not till the rereading that I recovered myself as a reviewer and sat down to be discerning and subtle and to apply what I have of the so-called "acumen" which is supposed to be the Zeiss lens of the critical apparatus. But I find myself abashed about setting up the customary critic's "stop" and "go" signals directing the author where to keep moving and where to make a turn, on his way to becoming a major poet. C. Day Lewis seems to know the way.

This goes for the first part of the book containing some short poems and a long *in memoriam* to a lost aviator friend. Following them are three essays grouped under the general heading of "Revolution in Writing" and separately named "The Revolution in Literature," "Writers and Morals" and "Revolutionaries and Poetry"; these in turn are followed by a verse play, "Noah and the Waters," begun as the "book" for a choral ballet but become something else in the creative process, a symbolic poetic drama in the tradition of the medieval morality plays.

The essays I didn't care for. They are flash performances wittily and brilliantly written, carelessly full of ideas which have not been thought through and which any shrewd critic, anti-Marxist or Marxist could rebut, though neither could question the unassailable revolutionary sincerity behind them.

"Noah and the Waters" would, for most other poets, be a very considerable achievement but alongside *"A Time to Dance"* it is a lesser work. It is one of those admirable failures that are more valuable than average successes. Noah represents the man of prestige; the waters are the working classes rising to flood out the bourgeois civilization. The waters and the burgesses compete for Noah's allegiance. He decides in favor of the waters. The clue to the identity of Noah is given in the quotation from the Communist manifesto with which he prefaces the play:

> Finally, when the class war is about to be fought to a finish, disintegration of the ruling class and the old order of society becomes so active, so acute, that a small part of the ruling class breaks away to make common cause with the revolutionary class, the class which holds the future in its hands. . . .

Noah, then, is the upright upper-class man who cannot stand the corruptions of his class. But he is torn by contradictions and these are expressed by two "voices," an affirmative and a negative, who speak for him and continue the contradictions until he makes his decision.

"Noah and the Waters" contains wonderful passages of poetry, but I have a feeling that Day Lewis became weary himself of the burden of his symbols and couldn't continue feeling serious about them. Here and there, he relieves himself wittily, in puns, but at these and the prose passages and other points the play as a poetic entity breaks down. He has not been possessed by his symbols; he is plainly conscious of them as artifices. As a result separate parts are better than the whole.

"A Time to Dance" is an elegy honoring L. P. Hedges. Its title comes from the moment in the poem when grief has exhausted itself and the feeling follows that the dead man has been absorbed by the surviving.

> My friend that was dead is alive. He bore transplanting
> Into a common soil

And the poet celebrates and is rebuked by the misery of the living. He answers, giving, incidentally, summed up in a line, the "ancestor" theory with which the British revolutionary poets have symbolized the continuity of tradition:

> The friend lies down with death;
> so is the ancestor conceived.

The poet speaks of the miners trapped in coal pits, of other of its involuntary martyrs who are in the same sense "ancestors" of the working classes. He continues, affirming his faith in the working class:

> —Into your hands history commits her spirit
> Submerged were you? An ocean's bed? But lately
> The skysails have felt a rumor, the seismograph too
> Has noticed something—
> First breath and tremor of your new-born day:
> When first a volcanic wave upgathering
> Shall choke their tidy lawns and their smooth talk,
> Dislocate empires, makes a fool of maps:
> Then a leviathan, breaking the surface of
> Terrified seas, a more than continent
> Shall rise—a world shaking from off its back
> The abyss and waste welter of multitudinous
> Oppressions, drying its valleys in the sunlight
> Reaching for heaven with firm and ardent hills
> . . . Sirs, you are that world
> Shall make a new world and be all the world.

There are other things to say of the poem. Day Lewis has a distinct literary individuality, but it has no extreme features. It is clear that he has done what in one of his essays he advises all poets to do, soak themselves in the best poetry of the language. His personal literary ancestry has been eugenically chosen. At the same time, however, he makes exciting use of contemporary material. These lines:

> Yet even now, and now most certainly
> for the arctic winter and *blackout* of your dreams

show how he can use a modern photographic term for forceful metaphor. He describes a long airplane flight and the machine is naturalized into poetry, as I have not seen it done before. I quote one passage, the level of which is sustained over many pages:

> They had not heard the last of death. When the mountains were passed,
> He raised another crest, the long crescendo of pain
> Kindled to climax, the plane
> Took fire. Alone in the sky with the breath of their enemy
> Hot in their face they fought: from three thousand feet they tilted
> Over, side-slipped away—a trick for an ace, a race
> And running duel with death: flame streamed out behind,
> A crimson scarf of, as life-blood out of a wound, but the wind
> Lagged and died out in smoke—he could not stay their pace.

Finally, he has in this poem some good examples of the deliberate doggerel of which he makes brilliantly effective use. The American poet, Peter York, has observed that not since Blake has doggerel been used so skilfully and with such serious purpose. It is one among several leads offered by Day Lewis that other proletarian poets might follow up.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Strikers in Uniform

THE FLOATING REPUBLIC: An Account of the Mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797, by G. E. Manwaring and Bonamy Dobree. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. $3.

A PRIME advantage of military over civil law for bourgeois-controlled governments is that workers who openly seek redress for grievances are no longer strikers but *mutineers*. The single word, "mutiny," has so many evil connotations for, and makes possible so much legal terror against, the rank-and-file of citizenry, that its mere substitution for the hackneyed word "strike" weakens the morale of all but the most resolute and class-conscious fighters.

Two English writers, one of them an accomplished naval historian, the other an ex-army man of proven literary ability, have joined forces to tell, in great detail and with exceptional understanding of their politico-economic significance, the little-known story of two British mutinies. Both of them occurred within a few years after the French Revolution, when England, "weighed down by war-weariness," was gathering her strength together for the brilliant economic and colonial expansion to come; each of them was rooted in a material degradation so profound, so utterly shameful and brutalizing as to make one marvel less at the criminal indifference of the government than at the dignity and forbearance of the men.

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"The Breeze at Spithead" was a mass-mutiny involving seventeen British men-of-war and carried through with a precision and degree of organization that help to explain why, some sixty years later, the Chartist movement provided Karl Marx and Frederick Engels with so many of the ideas basic to Communism today. Despite the character of the leadership (which was mostly that of upper-grade seamen and petty officers), the excessive "legalism" and demands rigidly limited to purely "economic" gains, the mass-support was there, solidly behind the delegates from the moment the signals were displayed ("the second signal," it might interest our red-baiters to know, "is a red flag at the mizeen topmast head, and two guns. . . .")

The Spithead Mutiny was "settled," at least on certain concrete issues of pay and conditions (which the officers promptly ignored); not so the tragic interlude of the Nore, whose guiding—and much misguided—spirit was the fanatic idealist, Richard Parker. Forced by debt and hardship to join the navy, he was shortly agitating among the embittered seamen of the wretched hulk, *Sandwich;* presently eleven other ships came over to the mutineers and desperate efforts were made to tie in with the actions of the Channel Fleet at Spithead. Unfortunately, Parker insisted on continuing the Nore action after Spithead had settled with the authorities—a step which led to the most vindictive reprisals, including the execution of Parker and wholesale trials of 400 seamen. In this case leadership, though more in sympathy with the rank-and-file, was of an excessively emotional type—proving once again Lenin's maxim that "revolutionary tactics cannot be built up on revolutionary moods alone."

I heartily recommend *The Floating Republic,* both as sound history brilliantly presented and as a meritorious contribution to the growing literature on the class struggle. If war is the basic industry of a decaying capitalist society, then "mutiny" is just a short, ugly word for "general strike" within that industry.

HAROLD WARD.

The Years of Darkness

DARKNESS AND DAWN, by Alexei Tolstoy. Longmans, Green and Co. $2.50.

A NOVEL so brilliant and vastly conceived as this one directs our attention at once backward and forward—backward to the great classic Russian novel out of which it springs, forward to the new Russian spirit which now adds its dimension to that classic mold. It is clear that Tolstoy is related to the older Tolstoy and to Turgenev by more than blood ties. He, with Gorky and Sholokhov, is a direct legatee of their art. He knows how to plan the broad canvas and to fill every corner of it with life, rich, articulate, authentic. He knows also, as they did, how to employ the novel in its highest capacities, so that it becomes the faithful record of a people and a time, more evocative and probing than formal history can hope to be.

Darkness and Dawn is such a novel. The title would seem to be a collective one, applying to two books of which this is the first. Certainly it is darkness alone that looms over this history of Russia's darkest years, 1914 to 1918. The darkness, first, of pre-war Russia, of endless tensions that found relief in eroticism on the one hand and anarchist plots on the other and in despair generally. The darkness of the war years, of liberalism's weak capitulation, of corruption at home and agony at the front, of the steady crumbling of those last defenses behind which the bourgeoisie still said their prayers to the old, sweet order. The darkness of the February revolution, the Provisional government, the new betrayal, the new blessings upon the old war. And the darkness of the October days, of chaos within and rapacity without, of Kornilov, Denikin, and the Allied intervention. It is only at the end that we have the hint of a dawn, just below the horizon but imminent. We expect another volume, filled with light, to be placed beside this volume of darkness.

I have referred above to the Russian novel's new dimension. It is that same new dimension which the Soviet revolution has added to every important manifestation of social culture. Let us call it direction. They have given new direction, or purpose, to the factories that once served only the rulers, to the land that once belonged only to the landlords, to the government that once existed only to exploit them. It is in this novel too, and most perceptible in Tolstoy's treatment of the individual characters. Why, we wonder, do these characters seem so different from those we have met before in Russian novels? And then we see that it is because these are not the over-emotional, over-voluble, impractical, vacillating creatures we have learned to recognize in the stories of Chekhov, Turgenev, Dostoievsky. They are not replicas of that celebrated "Slavic temperament" which those writers developed so lovingly. Here we come upon individuals who recognize meanings beyond the walls of their

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Do you know the truth about
SHOSTAKOVICH?
See page 29

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own lives and who respond to forces other than their own impulses. In the sisters whose lives we follow, Daria and Katia, in Roshin the White guard and Telegin the Bolshevik, in Smokovnikov the middle-class intellectual, and in Sorokin the opportunist military leader, we are dealing with representatives of the cross-currents that swept over Russia. They are people alive to their world, thoughtful instead of contemplative, opinionated instead of wistful, active instead of acted upon. These incisive, dynamic character studies of Tolstoy's ought to banish forever that antiquated, collective portrait of the doleful Slav. I think we shall hear no more, in Russian writing, of the Slavic temperament.

N. L. ROTHMAN.

Santayana's Asides

OBITER SCRIPTA, by George Santayana. Scribner's. $2.50.

IN HIS writings, *Obiter Scripta* and otherwise, Santayana is very much concerned that the spirit should be made at home in this world. To some his emphasis on spirit may seem an evasion. But Santayana considers that our age is "comfortable outwardly"; what he worries about is the inner man. Inasmuch as he himself has always been materially comfortable and the people whom he is addressing are supposedly likewise, we should excuse, perhaps, this very personal, not to say class, slant on the human predicament. He means well. He perceives that the lowly no less than their oppressors have needs, passions and a capacity for happiness. And, with a truly astonishing liberality, he recognizes the legitimate claim of every living interest to satisfaction. His "ultimate religion" lovingly embraces the good and perfection of every creature. If in the press of existence many are starved, defeated, mutilated—well, that is only in "the nature of things." The world is what it is, Santayana says not without some sadness; in it conflict and cruelty are inevitable.

His diagnosis of this "inevitable" conflict has its insights, but these stop short where his class prepossessions begin. He is, within his limits, a realist; he prides himself on his collaboration with common sense. He believes that human life is inextricably rooted in and circumscribed by an encircling material world, and that it is possessed of vegetative and animal propulsions. He sees that man is by necessity and instinct a social animal. He understands that personal interests bias thought, and that religions and all idealistic philosophies are myths, expressive of the ways of mind but invalid and pernicious when taken as interpretations of reality. It is in his emphasis on the "essentially solitary," irrepressible, wayward, spontaneously-determined character of the individual that Santayana begins to go astray. The world, he asserts, is crowded; human nature infinitely diverse. Each individual having his own private complexion, each struggling to fulfil his own particular interests, necessarily comes into conflict with the contrary demands of his fellows and with social institutions and conventions established under the sway of sentiments and purposes alien to himself.

LITERARY TEA *Mackey*

How then is the spirit to be made at home? In the first place, by a "reverence . . . for the ways of substance"—that is, by facing the facts and adjusting ourselves to them. Thus we are to recognize our animal commitments and the facts of disparity and of conflict. Secondly, by a realization that the exercise of our natural functions is self-justifying. The pleasures of the senses and the play of the mind are ultimate values. War and love-making, too, although in themselves "cruel, silly, and dull" "prompt in a civilized soul the most sublime consecrations," and have their vital justification. And thirdly, the spirit is to be made at home through a practical allegiance (however enlightened) to racial or national traditions. "Sacred material foundations must be laid deep and preserved at all costs." And why at all costs? Santayana has noticed the restlessness of the underlings. He has a fear that "the ruffians may be upon us some day."

Missing the basic economic causes underlying historical progression, and the true relation between social organization and the individual, Santayana makes a virtue of frivolity and reactionism. This may be seen only too clearly in his recent best-seller *The Last Puritan,* where the generalized prescriptions for the spirit which I have drawn from *Obiter Scripta* are set forth more specifically and vividly. There Oliver, who hates chaos and wishes to abolish injustice, exemplifies Santayana's belief that only waste and unhappiness result from an unwillingness to compromise with things as they are—whether this unwillingness takes the form of puritanism or the "Red Communist tyranny" which the author suggests that Oliver, had he lived, would have accepted. It is the dilettant Mario, wedded to "the new Italy," who is to "hand on the torch of true civilization."

Santayana is an accomplished and urbane writer. Very amiably and subtly, he offers an apology for war, complacency toward suffering, subjection of women, class injustice, race prejudice. He deserves a place of honor among the enemies of progress.

KATHERINE ELLIS.

Brief Review

CAPITAL, by Karl Marx, Modern Library Giant, $1. It is significant that the interest in Marxism has reached such a point that its basic book has been added to the popular and widely circulated Modern Library series. The translation is that of Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling and was edited by Engels.

YOUTH DEMANDS PEACE, by James Lerner. The American League Against War and Fascism has published a pamphlet which merits wide distribution among young people. The wherefore of war is stated in a lively fashion with pertinent reference to the findings of the Nye Committee. Current illusions about "keeping out of war" are effectively discussed and a genuine peace program set forth.

FATHERLAND, by Karl Billinger, International Publishers. $1.25. Published less than a year ago, *Fatherland* has already become a classic of revolutionary literature. In this moving record of prison and concentration camp life in Germany are revealed the heroic activities of the growing underground movement that is ever active, despite the brutal persecution of the Nazi regime. Rereading it, one is again struck by the author's amazing objectivity, his genius for writing simply and understandingly of the terrifying experiences that he and thousands of others endure in their relentless fight against Nazism. Billinger has added a new preface in this edition in which he stresses the urgency for German workers of all political faiths to join hands in one united struggle against fascism. I. S.

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The Theater

Theater Critics and Audiences

AS everyone knows who has looked into the subject, books on the theater and the dance are for the most part uninspired bores. Those which have not been cut according to one of various tired patterns usually betray over-borrowings; those attempting fresh critical departures are too often emasculated by ultra-personal impressionism. At strange intervals, of course, there is a Bernard Shaw, an Isadora Duncan, a brilliant analyst who illuminates an epoch. But a genuinely fruitful viewpoint has been the persistent rarity; and at least in recent years comprehensive presentations involving positive social understanding have not appeared. If two new theater books are landmarks in their respective fields, it is largely because a dynamic appreciation of socio-cultural processes has enabled John Howard Lawson and, to a lesser degree, Lincoln Kirstein to organize and recreate mazes of extant material.

Lawson's *Theory and Technique of Playwriting* (G. P. Putnam, $2.75) has already been reported in THE NEW MASSES through Barrett Clark's stimulating review, but it is a work abundant with suggestions which are sure to provoke discussion and revaluation for a long time. No reviewer has as yet striven with the crucial problems of playwriting which Lawson explores, perhaps because of the mechanical limitations of contemporary publishing which make touch-and-go criticism almost the necessity. A thousand words, at present space-rates a reviewer's luxury, would only provide a springboard for diving into a study of Lawson's system. Meanwhile, the entire first half of his book can be accepted as a prodigy of critical writing—indisputably required reading. The history of dramatic theory since Aristotle has been ordered into a gleaming, solid structure, so that the whole is considerably more than the sum of its separate, contradictory parts. And from the history emerges a critical method which, when applied to the contemporary theater, vastly illuminates it in terms of conscious will striving with social necessity: the very form of dramatic thought is today negated by an unrealistic approach to the social environment. However often one disagrees with Lawson's judgments, every specific criticism flows from a rounded, organized, self-contained system. He becomes the most considerable living critic of dramatic theory.

Today the playwright must think creatively if he is serious and realizes his need to break "the mold of outworn ideas"; and "to think creatively one must understand one's art and the principles which govern the creative process." Lawson attempts to furnish the answer in Parts III and IV of his book; on the dynamics and mechanics of construction. His introductory remarks to this section furnish the key to his analytical approach.

> Since the playwright is a *person performing an act,* he is governed by the same laws of dramatic action which govern the characters in the play he is creating. . . . *The laws of drama are laws of volitional representation of action.* This is a form of thinking; the laws of the drama are derived from the laws of the movement of thought. . . . We find that the *idea of drama* is understood by all men in all times and places. The laws of the drama apply equally to the *Medea* of Euripides, or Kalidasa's great Sanscrit drama, *Sakuntala,* or the Chinese *Sorrows of Han,* or the *Three Spiders* of Chekhov. In each case the dramatic effect is produced by an identical process: the laws of the drama determine the specific form of volitional representation which expresses the playwright's consciousness and purpose under specific social conditions.

Applied to the contemporary play, Lawson's analysis is bound to bare the central weak spots ("Plays have developed fictitious tension" because conflict is avoided; "the most common method of sustaining audience-interest without progression is the use of surprise . . . it has become the basic technique of the modern drama.") But any such treatise on playwriting must remain tentative so long as our knowledge of creative processes remains as slim as it is today. A play, like any other art product, depends to an enormous degree on mental processes removed from conscious thinking—non-analytical processes which go on for a long time in the writer's mind before he puts a single scene on paper. Lawson's omission of this period in the creation by no means argues that he denies its existence, but points to the inadequacy of available material, for despite the suggestions of F. C. Prescott, J. L. Lowes, Kostyleff, Jespersen, Leuba, Aiken, etc., there is nothing approaching an organized, scientific understanding of the subject. Lawson starts out at the second stage in the writing process, after the period of "sub-conscious" or "sub-vocal" gestation has accumulated the material out of which the writer builds his play. The analysis of creative method, therefore, is only partly valid since it is based on only part of the creative process. It remains for Lawson to write the missing part. The dynamic manner in which he has penetrated and ordered his material would prove invaluable in such an undertaking. And the results could be indispensable not only for the drama but for every division of writing, which today more than ever suffers from the effects of universal ignorance of the subject.

With Kirstein, whose chief task was chronology, appreciation of socio-cultural processes underlies to a degree the treatment of his materials, although it never appears baldly but peeks through the surface in innuendo and occasional analogies to the present. Casual readers of his *Dance: A Short History of Classic Theatrical Dancing* (Putnam, $5) may remain unaware of its presence, but only because the material is generally unfamiliar.

Dance begins with the origins in social and religious uses among primitives; ritual among the Egyptians; communal, choral dance and mime among the Greeks; sterile overemphases of mime and spectacle among the Romans. Although theatrical dancing as such disappeared for a thousand years, Kirstein does not skip from 300 to 1,300 but observes the insinuation of drama into church ritual, to which it became indispensable. Dancing is essentially "the Devil's business" and the devil became "the first dancer of the Middle Ages." A rich discussion relates the various medieval influences—chivalric, courtly, folk dances, folk music, the mass-dance manias (excrescence of the plagues), anti-clerical satires, etc. With the Renascence, its triumphs, carnivalia, the "first ballet" at a banquet ball, there is dancing in the theaters and in the court ballet in which "politics plucked the strings of the lutes, designed collars and crowns and arranged the order of dances." The stage is set for modern theatrical dancing. And with somewhat less gusto, Kirstein covers the 1581-1935 years, situating schools, individuals, events solidly, sometimes brilliantly, except for numerous overemphases on ballet, which seriously obfuscate and underestimate the abundant potentialities of the current dance movements.

This is a book for people who have hopelessly ransacked library shelves for a readable history. There are 327 closely-printed pages demanding study, but rereading is rewarded. Kirstein took a middle course between personality-chapters and orthodox event-chronology. It has turned out well. His particular activities as scholar, student of music and art, poet, director of the American Ballet have enabled him to enrich his subject with the residues of these experiences. Occasional disbalance is compensated for by a communicative intensity which chiefly explains the book's bigness. Even the contemporary section, with which we utterly disagree, is written out of characteristic passion and necessity.

Such books as the two under discussion are by no means the concern of the specialist. "A living theater is a theater of the people," Lawson writes as his final sentence, thereby wisely emphasizing the whole direction of the new theater and new dance movements which have drawn their vitality largely from a creative relationship between artist and audience. Unfortunately, both volumes are offered at prohibitive prices; mass circulation of $5 and $2.75 books is out of the question. Would it be impossible for Kirstein to make a condensed version of his work, for mass distribution at mass prices? Would Lawson consider reprinting the first half of his book as a pamphlet? Much work would be necessary, ellipses might prove unavoidable. But the result in terms of audience would be overwhelming compensation. Landmarks prohibitively priced can hardly fulfil their possibilities today when mass understanding is the life-source of the theater.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

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The Screen

God, Mary Pickford and the Horse

IT IS this reviewer's duty to report that for years there has existed among left-wingers a small but seasoned band of cynical, noisy and altogether obnoxious intellectuals given to greeting the pronouncements of even the noblest NEW MASSES critics with blasts of happy derision that would, if available to the public, make Mr. Hearst seem by comparison at least a fellow-traveler. Wise-guys is the term usually applied to such people, if you could call them people, and the full challenge "Oh, you're a wise-guy, huh?" is reserved, as everyone knows, for only the most formal occasions.

You may find it hard to believe there actually is such a circle of people, but there is, and in fact I used to belong to this cultural Mafia myself, resigning from it only on the moment of joining THE NEW MASSES battery of movie authorities. But vivid recollections, to say nothing of old habits, die hard. By simple mental telepathy I hear a thousand YCL'rs raise their confident voices, on Saturday night, to say: "Fearing says *One Rainy Afternoon* is lousy, so it must be swell —let's go!"

Well, wise-guy, this time you're wrong. It really is the season's crowning bore, no matter how many stars The Daily News may hand it (they gave it three, to be exact, but it seems likely that on their standard nothing under ten really counts) and no matter how dull the other Hollywood offerings of the last six weeks, with one or two exceptions, may have been. It's all about Francis Lederer, who is just as good and just the same as Maurice Chevalier, kissing Ida Lupino by mistake. It is copiously labeled as a farce and it's such a bad and obvious imitation of him that you suddenly realize just how good René Claire really is. Especially, it saddens you to think how the American movie has deteriorated since the Golden Age of the cowboy, the cattle-rustler and the horse. And to add the last straw, it's doubly depressing to see a lot of such old favorites as Hugh Herbert, Roland Young, Joseph Cawthorn and Donald Meek exerting themselves so vainly and so strenuously to prop up a ham scenario that nothing and no one could have saved.

The film is announced as the first production of the new Pickford-Lasky enterprise, and by every known rule of the game it ought to be, it cannot help but be, it will be, it has to be, the last. But the Pickford part of this combination, none other than Mary, "America's Sweetheart" in case you have forgotten, has always had an unerring instinct for the box-office. One cannot help being filled with an uneasy fear that the author of *Why Not Try God?* (What now? Are they going to bring Him up on a criminal-syndicalism charge?) may be quietly and competently digging new low levels for the American movie.

It may not be a bad guess, at that, that some such foul move is on foot. Listen to Rowland V. Lee, the director who perpetrated *One Rainy Afternoon,* as he discussed the motion-picture market with Eileen Creelman of The New York Sun:

> It's got to be international. You can't ignore that international market now; it's 41 percent of your total.
>
> That should be remembered all the time. If I hear a story that Hollywood will like, or New York will like, I forget it. The kind I want is the kind that can be simplified down to a parable, that can be understood in a sort of international language.
>
> Sometimes there are dialect plays or localized pictures that make New York say "marvelous," and Chicago say "great" and Hollywood say "swell." That's no good for me. They've got to be understood everywhere. It's fun to make pictures for your friends, but it's awfully expensive.

In short, there is still a big question in movie circles as to what, precisely what, is the lowest of all common denominators in cinema plot and direction. When the moguls really put their heads together, they will be dishing out movies not only for you, but for

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JOSHUA KUNITZ

JUST returned from the Soviet Union, where he was correspondent of the New Masses, and where he gained first-hand knowledge of the Shostakovitch controversy, will give a talk on

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your bull-pup and your pet cat and even your kitchen cockroaches at ten cents a head. So you can all take the evening off and sit together and I'll bet you ten bucks to a dime The Daily News lists it as the smash-hit of the season. It will be pared down to such a sweet, simple parable that even readers of The Atlantic Monthly will understand it.

But, on second thought, I don't know. It is evidently Mr. Rowland's intention to sell these movies not only to the bushmen of Australia, the pigmies of Africa and the cannibals of the Caribees, but also to the Junior Leaguers and the Brooklyn Dodgers. Maybe he can, but then he will still have before him the formidable task of manufacturing pictures that sell in both Germany and the U.S.S.R. Now, how's he going to do that? But, all right, assume that Mr. Rowland is the realization of Nietzsche's superman and that he has somehow surmounted these insurmountable obstacles. Then what?

I have a strong hunch that when he has a picture that will make Austria say "marvelous," and Germany say "great," and Italy say "swell"—New York will say "It stinks," Chicago will say "Bury it," and Hollywood will be hollering "Uncle."

I'll take the horse and wahoo, any day.

KENNETH FEARING.

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Between Ourselves

LAST week's issue announced the names and titles of the two "big winners" of $1,000 and $250 cash prizes in our Cartoon Title contest. This week we publish the names and addresses of forty-nine of the remaining winners who have received $5 each. (The fiftieth asked that the name be withheld.) We would like to print the winning titles below, but the space requirements make this impossible:

OTHER PRIZE WINNERS:

Robert W. White, 737 Coney Island Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
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"Spain Advances" published in this issue is the first of a series of articles by Ilya Ehrenbourg on "Spain in Revolt." The second article will appear in an early issue. The series has been translated by Leon Dennen.

The drawing by Mackey on page 27 has been selected from the exhibition of his watercolors and drawings now taking place at the A.C.A. Gallery, 52 West 8 Street, New York. The exhibition will continue through May.

Of the three poets in this issue, Stepan Stepanchev is a steel worker; Arthur Schutzer is a lawyer; H. H. Lewis is a farmer-poet who has published four books of verse for which appreciation is steadily growing. A study of his work by William Carlos Williams will appear in a later issue of THE NEW MASSES.

Joseph Freeman will speak for the Newark Friends of THE NEW MASSES on Thursday, June 4. William E. Browder will be chairman. *Subject*: Culture and the Crisis. *Time*: 8:30 p. m. *Place*: Y.M.H.A., High and Kinney Streets, where tickets are on sale now.

Our recent offer to readers to subscribe for THE NEW MASSES in behalf of political prisoners and other victims of the labor struggle at the reduced rate of $3 per year (which constitutes our own contribution to this cause) has brought splendid results so far. We have already entered more than fifty subscriptions on this basis for varying lengths of time. And copies of THE NEW MASSES are being regularly received by the beneficiaries.

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